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COLLECTED EDITION.

VOLUME III.

MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN LECTURES,

THE STORY OF A FEATHER.

AND

THE SICK GIANT AND THE DOCTOR DWARF.

MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN LECTURES,

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THE SICK GIANT AND THE DOCTOR DWARF.

BY

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

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PREFACE.

It has happened to the writer that two, or three, or ten, or twenty gentlewomen have asked him—and asked in various notes of wonder, pity, and reproof—

"*What could have made you think of Mrs. Caudle? How could such a thing have entered any man's mind?*"

There are subjects that seem like raindrops to fall upon a man's head, the head itself having nothing to do with the matter. The result of no train of thought, there is the picture, the statue, the book, wafted, like the smallest seed, into the brain to feed upon the soil, such as it may be, and grow there. And this was, no doubt, the accidental cause of the literary sowing, and expansion—unfolding like a night-flower—of Mrs. Caudle.

But let a jury of gentlewomen decide.

It was a thick, black wintry afternoon, when the writer stopt in the front of the play-ground of a suburban school. The ground swarmed with boys full of the Saturday's holiday. The earth seemed roofed with the oldest lead; and the wind came, sharp as Shylock's knife, from the Minories. But those happy boys ran and jumped, and hopped and shouted, and—unconscious men in miniature!—in their own world of frolic, had no thought of the full-length men they would some day become; drawn out into grave citizenship; formal, respectable, responsible. To them *the sky was of* any or all colours; and for that keen east-wind—if

it was called the east-wind—cutting the shoulder-blades of old, old men of forty—they in their immortality of boyhood had the redder faces, and the nimbler blood for it.

And the writer, looking dreamily into that play-ground, still mused on the robust jollity of those little fellows, to whom the tax-gatherer was as yet a rarer animal than baby hippopotamus. Heroic boyhood, so ignorant of the future in the knowing enjoyment of the present! And the writer, still dreaming and musing, and still following no distinct line of thought, there struck upon him, like notes of sudden household music, these words—CURTAIN LECTURES.

One moment there was no living object save those racing, shouting boys; and the next, as though a white dove had alighted on the pen-hand of the writer, there was—MRS. CAUDLE.

Ladies of the jury, are there not then some subjects of letters that mysteriously assert an effect without any discoverable cause? Otherwise, wherefore should the thought of CURTAIN LECTURES grow from a school-ground—wherefore, among a crowd of holiday schoolboys, should appear MRS. CAUDLE?

For the LECTURES themselves, it is feared they must be given up as a farcical desecration of a solemn time-honoured privilege; it may be, exercised once in a lifetime,—and that once having the effect of a hundred repetitions: as JOB lectured his wife. And Job's wife, a certain Mohammedan writer delivers, having committed a fault in her love to her husband, he swore that on his recovery he would deal her a hundred stripes. Job got well, and his heart was touched and taught by the tenderness to keep his vow, and still to chastise his helpmate; for he smote her once with a palm-branch having a hundred leaves.

D. J.

WEST LODGE, PUTNEY LOWER COMMON,
March 30, 1852.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures	1
The Story of a Feather	101
The Sick Giant and the Doctor Dwarf . .	307

INTRODUCTION.

Poor Job Caudle was one of the few men whom Nature, in her casual bounty to women, sends into the world as patient listeners. He was, perhaps, in more respects than one, all ears. And these ears, Mrs. Caudle—his lawful, wedded wife, as she would ever and anon impress upon him, for she was not a woman to wear chains without shaking them—took whole and sole possession of. They were her entire property; as expressly made to convey to Caudle's brain the stream of wisdom that continually flowed from the lips of his wife, as was the tin funnel through which Mrs. Caudle in vintage time bottled her elder wine. There was, however, this difference between the wisdom and the wine. The wine was always sugared: the wisdom, never. It was expressed crude from the heart of Mrs. Caudle; who, doubtless, trusted to the sweetness of her husband's disposition to make it agree with him.

Philosophers have debated whether morning or night is most conducive to the strongest and clearest moral impressions. The Grecian sage confessed that his labours smelt of the lamp. In like manner, did Mrs. Caudle's wisdom smell of the rushlight. She knew that her husband was too much distracted by his business as toy-man and doll-merchant to digest her lessons in the broad day. Besides, she could never make sure of him: he was always liable to be summoned to the shop. Now from

eleven at night until seven in the morning, there was no retreat for him. He was compelled to lie and listen. Perhaps there was little magnanimity in this on the part of Mrs. Caudle; but in marriage, as in war, it is permitted to take every advantage of the enemy. Besides, Mrs. Caudle copied very ancient and classic authority. Minerva's bird, the very wisest thing in feathers, is silent all the day. So was Mrs. Caudle. Like the owl, she hooted only at night.

Mr. Caudle was blessed with an indomitable constitution. One fact will prove the truth of this. He lived thirty years with Mrs. Caudle, surviving her. Yes, it took thirty years for Mrs. Caudle to lecture and dilate upon the joys, griefs, duties, and vicissitudes comprised within that seemingly small circle—the wedding-ring. We say, seemingly small; for the thing, as viewed by the vulgar, naked eye, is a tiny hoop made for the third feminine finger. Alack! like the ring of Saturn, for good or evil it circles a whole world. Or to take a less gigantic figure, it compasses a vast region: it may be Arabia Felix, and it may be Arabia Petrea.

A lemon-hearted cynic might liken the wedding-ring to an ancient Circus, in which wild animals clawed one another for the sport of lookers-on. Perish the hyperbole! We would rather compare it to an elfin ring, in which dancing fairies made the sweetest music for infirm humanity.

Manifold are the uses of rings. Even swine are tamed by them. You will see a vagrant, hilarious, devastating porker—a full-blooded fellow that would bleed into many, many fathoms of black pudding—you will see him, escaped from his proper home, straying in a neighbour's garden. How he tramples upon the heart's-ease: how, with quivering snout, he roots up lilies—odoriferous bulbs! Here he gives a reckless snatch at thyme and marjoram—and here he munches violets and gillyflowers. At length the marauder is detected, seized by his owner, and driven, beaten home. To make the porker less dangerous, it is

determined that he shall be *ringed*. The sentence is pronounced —execution ordered. Listen to his screams!

> "Would you not think the knife was in his throat?
> And yet they're only boring through his nose!"

Hence, for all future time, the porker behaves himself with a sort of forced propriety—for in either nostril he carries a ring. It is, for the greatness of humanity, a saddening thought, that sometimes men must be treated no better than pigs.

But Mr. Job Caudle was not of these men. Marriage to him was not made a necessity. No; for him call it if you will a happy chance—a golden accident. It is, however, enough for us to know that he was married; and was therefore made the recipient of a wife's wisdom. Mrs. Caudle, like Mahomet's dove, continually pecked at the good man's ears; and it is a happiness to learn from what he left behind that he had hived all her sayings in his brain; and further, that he employed the mellow evening of his life to put such sayings down, that, in due season they might be enshrined in imperishable type.

When Mr. Job Caudle was left in this briary world without his daily guide and nocturnal monitress, he was in the ripe fulness of fifty-two. For three hours at least after he went to bed—such slaves are we to habit—he could not close an eye. His wife still talked at his side. True it was, she was dead and decently interred. His mind—it was a comfort to know it—could not wander on this point; this he knew. Nevertheless, his wife was with him. The Ghost of her Tongue still talked as in the life; and again and again did Job Caudle hear the monitions of by-gone years. At times, so loud, so lively, so real were the sounds, that Job, with a cold chill, doubted if he were really widowed. And then, with the movement of an arm, a foot, he would assure himself that he was alone in his holland. Nevertheless, the talk continued. It was terrible to be thus haunted by a voice: to have advice, commands, remonstrance,

all sorts of saws and adages still poured upon him, and no visible wife. Now did the voice speak from the curtains; now from the tester; and now did it whisper to Job from the very pillow that he pressed. "It's a dreadful thing that her tongue should walk in this manner," said Job, and then he thought confusedly of exorcism, or at least of counsel from the parish priest.

Whether Job followed his own brain, or the wise direction of another, we know not. But he resolved every night to commit to paper one curtain lecture of his late wife. The employment would, possibly, lay the ghost that haunted him. It was her dear tongue that cried for justice, and when thus satisfied, it might possibly rest in quiet. And so it happened. Job faithfully chronicled all his late wife's lectures; the ghost of her tongue was thenceforth silent, and Job slept all his after nights in peace.

When Job died, a small packet of papers was found inscribed as follows:—

"*Curtain Lectures delivered in the course of Thirty Years by Mrs. Margaret Caudle, and suffered by Job, her Husband.*"

That Mr. Caudle had his eye upon the future printer, is made pretty probable by the fact that in most places he had affixed the text—such text for the most part arising out of his own daily conduct—to the lecture of the night. He had also, with an instinctive knowledge of the dignity of literature, left a bank-note of very fair amount with the manuscript. Following our duty as editor, we trust we have done justice to both documents.

MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

MR. CAUDLE HAS LENT FIVE POUNDS TO A FRIEND.

"You ought to be very rich, Mr. Caudle. I wonder who'd lend you five pounds? But so it is: a wife may work and may slave! Ha, dear! the many things that might have been done with five pounds. As if people picked up money in the street! But you always were a fool, Mr. Caudle! I've wanted a black satin gown these three years, and that five pounds would have entirely bought it. But it's no matter how I go,—not at all. Everybody says I don't dress as becomes your wife—and I don't; but what's that to you, Mr. Caudle? Nothing. Oh no! you can have fine feelings for everybody but those belonging to you. I wish people knew you, as I do—that's all. You like to be called liberal—and your poor family pays for it.

"All the girls want bonnets, and where they're to come from I can't tell. Half five pounds would have bought 'em—but now they must go without. Of course, *they* belong to you: and anybody but your own flesh and blood, Mr. Caudle!

"The man called for the water-rate to-day; but I should like to know how people are to pay taxes, who throw away five pounds to every fellow that asks them?

"Perhaps you don't know that Jack, this morning, knocked his shuttle-cock through his bed-room window. I was going to send for the glazier to mend it; but after you lent that five pounds I was sure we couldn't afford it. Oh, no! the window must go as it is; and pretty weather for a dear child to sleep with a broken window. He's got a cold already on his lungs, and I shouldn't at all wonder if that broken window settled him. If the dear boy dies, his death will be upon his father's head; for I'm sure we can't now pay to mend windows. We might though,

and do a good many more things, too, if people didn't throw away their five pounds.

"Next Tuesday the fire-insurance is due. I should like to know how it's to be paid? Why, it can't be paid at all! That five pounds would have more than done it—and now, insurance is out of the question. And there never were so many fires as there are now. I shall never close my eyes all night,—but what's that to you, so people can call you liberal, Mr. Caudle? Your wife and children may all be burnt alive in their beds—as all of us to a certainty shall be, for the insurance *must* drop. And after we've insured for so many years! But how, I should like to know, are people to insure who make ducks and drakes of their five pounds?

"I did think we might go to Margate this summer. There's poor little Caroline, I'm sure she wants the sea. But no, dear creature! she must stop at home—all of us must stop at home—she'll go into a consumption, there's no doubt of that; yes—sweet little angel!—I've made up my mind to lose her, *now*. The child might have been saved; but people can't save their children and throw away their five pounds too.

"I wonder where poor little Mopsy is? While you were lending that five pounds, the dog ran out of the shop. You know, I never let it go into the street, for fear it should be bit by some mad dog, and come home and bite all the children. It wouldn't now at all astonish me if the animal was to come back with the hydrophobia, and give it to all the family. However, what's your family to you, so you can play the liberal creature with five pounds?

"Do you hear that shutter, how it's banging to and fro? Yes,—I know what it wants as well as you; it wants a new fastening. I was going to send for the blacksmith to-day, but now it's out of the question: *now* it must bang of nights, since you've thrown away five pounds.

"Ha! there's the soot falling down the chimney. If I hate the smell of anything, it's the smell of soot. And you know it; but what are my feelings to you? *Sweep the chimney!* Yes, it's all very fine to say, sweep the chimney—but how are chimneys to be swept—how are they to be paid for by people who don't take care of their five pounds?

"Do you hear the mice running about the room? *I* hear them. If they were to drag only you out of bed, it would be no matter. *Set a trap for them!* Yes, it's easy enough to say—set a trap for 'em. But how are people to afford mouse-traps, when every day they lose five pounds?

"Hark! I 'm sure there's a noise down stairs. It wouldn't at

all surprise me if there were thieves in the house. Well, it *may* be the cat; but thieves are pretty sure to come in some night. There's a wretched fastening to the back-door; but these are not times to afford bolts and bars, when people won't take care of their five pounds.

"Mary Anne ought to have gone to the dentist's to-morrow. She wants three teeth taken out. Now, it can't be done. Three teeth that quite disfigure the child's mouth. But there they must stop, and spoil the sweetest face that was ever made. Otherwise, she'd have been a wife for a lord. Now, when she grows up, who'll have her? Nobody. We shall die, and leave her alone and unprotected in the world. But what do you care for that? Nothing; so you can squander away five pounds."

"And thus," comments Caudle, "according to my wife, she—dear soul!—couldn't have a satin gown—the girls couldn't have new bonnets—the water-rate must stand over—Jack must get his death through a broken window—our fire-insurance couldn't be paid, so that we should all fall victims to the devouring element—we couldn't go to Margate, and Caroline would go to an early grave—the dog would come home and bite us all mad—the shutter would go banging for ever—the soot would always fall—the mice never let us have a wink of sleep—thieves be always breaking in the house—our dear Mary Anne be for ever left an unprotected maid,—and with other evils falling upon us, all, all because I would go on lending five pounds!"

LECTURE II.

MR. CAUDLE HAS BEEN AT A TAVERN WITH A FRIEND, AND "IS ENOUGH TO POISON A WOMAN" WITH TOBACCO-SMOKE.

"I'm sure I don't know who'd be a poor woman! I don't know who'd tie themselves up to a man, if they knew only half they'd have to bear. A wife must stay at home, and be a drudge, whilst a man can go anywhere. It's enough for a wife to sit like Cinderella by the ashes, whilst her husband can go drinking and singing at a tavern. *You never sing?* How do I know you never sing? It's very well for you to say so; but if I could hear you, I dare say you're among the worst of 'em.

"And now, I suppose, it will be the tavern every night? If you think I'm going to sit up for you, Mr. Caudle, you're very much mistaken. No: and I'm not going to get out of my

warm bed to let you in, either. No: nor Susan shan't sit up for you. No: nor you shan't have a latch-key. I'm not going to sleep with the door upon the latch, to be murdered before the morning.

"Faugh! Pah! Whewgh! That filthy tobacco-smoke! It's enough to kill any decent woman. You know I hate tobacco, and yet you will do it. *You don't smoke yourself?* What of that? If you go among people who *do* smoke, you're just as bad, or worse. You might as well smoke—indeed, better. Better smoke yourself than come home with other people's smoke all in your hair and whiskers.

"I never knew any good come to a man who went to a tavern. Nice companions he picks up there! Yes; people who make it a boast to treat their wives like slaves, and ruin their families. There's that wretch, Harry Prettyman. See what he's come to. He doesn't now get home till two in the morning; and then in what a state! He begins quarrelling with the door-mat, that his poor wife may be afraid to speak to him. A mean wretch! But don't you think I'll be like Mrs. Prettyman. No: I wouldn't put up with it from the best man that ever trod. You'll not make me afraid to speak to you, however you may swear at the door-mat. No, Mr. Caudle, that you won't.

"*You don't intend to stay out till two in the morning?* How do you know what you'll do when you get among such people? Men can't answer for themselves when they get boozing one with another. They never think of their poor wives, who are grieving and wearing themselves out at home. A nice headache you'll have to-morrow morning—or rather *this* morning; for it must be past twelve. *You won't have a headache?* It's very well for you to say so, but I know you will; and then you may nurse yourself for me. Ha! that filthy tobacco again! No; I shall not go to sleep like a good soul. How's people to go to sleep when they're suffocated?

"Yes, Mr. Caudle, you'll be nice and ill in the morning! But don't you think I'm going to let you have your breakfast in bed, like Mrs. Prettyman. I'll not be such a fool. No; nor I won't have discredit brought upon the house by sending for soda-water early, for all the neighbourhood to say, 'Caudle was drunk last night.' No: I've some regard for the dear children, if you havn't. No: nor you shan't have broth for dinner. Not a neck of mutton crosses my threshold, I can tell you.

"*You won't want soda, and you won't want broth?* All the better. You wouldn't get 'em if you did, I can assure you. ———Dear, dear, dear! That filthy tobacco! I'm sure it's enough to make me as bad as you are. Talking about getting

divorced,—I'm sure tobacco ought to be good grounds. How little does a woman think, when she marries, that she gives herself up to be poisoned! You men contrive to have it all of your own side, you do. Now if I was to go and leave you and the children, a pretty noise there'd be! You, however, can go and smoke no end of pipes and——*You didn't smoke?* It's all the same, Mr. Caudle, if you go among smoking people. Folks are known by their company. You'd better smoke yourself, than bring home the pipes of all the world.

"Yes, I see how it will be. Now you've once gone to a tavern, you'll always be going. You'll be coming home tipsy every night; and tumbling down and breaking your leg, and putting out your shoulder; and bringing all sorts of disgrace and expense upon us. And then you'll be getting into a street fight—oh! I know your temper too well to doubt it, Mr. Caudle—and be knocking down some of the police. And then I know what will follow. It *must* follow. Yes, you'll be sent for a month or six weeks to the treadmill. Pretty thing that, for a respectable tradesman, Mr. Caudle, to be put upon the treadmill with all sorts of thieves and vagabonds, and—there, again, that horrible tobacco!—and riffraff of every kind. I should like to know how your children are to hold up their heads, after their father has been upon the treadmill?——No; I *won't* go to sleep. And I'm not talking of what's impossible. I know it will all happen—every bit of it. If it wasn't for the dear children, you might be ruined and I wouldn't so much as speak about it, but—oh, dear, dear! at least you might go where they smoke *good* tobacco—but I can't forget that I'm their mother. At least, they shall have *one* parent.

"Taverns! Never did a man go to a tavern who didn't die a beggar. And how your pot-companions will laugh at you when they see your name in the Gazette! For it *must* happen. Your business is sure to fall off; for what respectable people will buy toys for their children of a drunkard? You're not a drunkard! No: but you will be—it's all the same.

"You've begun by staying out till midnight. By-and-by 'twill be all night. But don't you think, Mr. Caudle, you shall ever have a key. I know you. Yes; you'd do exactly like that Prettyman, and what did he do, only last Wednesday? Why, he let himself in about four in the morning, and brought home with him his pot-companion, Puffy. His dear wife woke at six, and saw Prettyman's dirty boots at her bed-side. And where was the wretch, her husband? Why, he was drinking down stairs—swilling. Yes; worse than a midnight robber, he'd taken the keys out of his dear wife's pockets—ha! what that poor creature

has to bear!—and had got at the brandy. A pretty thing for a wife to wake at six in the morning, and instead of her husband to see his dirty boots!

"But I'll not be made your victim, Mr. Caudle, not I. You shall never get at my keys, for they shall lie under my pillow—under my own head, Mr. Caudle.

"You'll be ruined, but if I can help it, you shall ruin nobody but yourself.

"Oh! that hor—hor—hor—i—ble tob—ac——co!"

To this lecture, Caudle affixes no comment. A certain proof, we think, that the man had nothing to say for himself.

LECTURE III.

MR. CAUDLE JOINS A CLUB,—"THE SKYLARKS."

"Well, if a woman hadn't better be in her grave than be married! That is, if she can't be married to a decent man. No; I don't care if you are tired, I *shan't* let you go to sleep. No, and I won't say what I have to say in the morning; I'll say it now. It's all very well for you to come home at what time you like—it's now half-past twelve—and expect I'm to hold my tongue, and let you go to sleep. What next, I wonder? A woman had better be sold for a slave at once.

"And so you've gone and joined a club? The Skylarks, indeed! A pretty skylark you'll make of yourself! But I won't stay and be ruined by you. No: I'm determined on that. I'll go and take the dear children, and you may get who you like to keep your house. That is, as long as you have a house to keep—and that won't be long, I know.

"How any decent man can go and spend his nights in a tavern!—oh, yes, Mr. Caudle; I dare say you *do* go for rational conversation. I should like to know how many of you would care for what you call rational conversation, if you had it without your filthy brandy-and-water; yes, and your more filthy tobacco-smoke. I'm sure the last time you came home, I had the head-ache for a week. But I know who it is who's taking you to destruction. It's that brute, Prettyman. He has broken his own poor wife's heart, and now he wants to—but don't you think it, Mr. Caudle; I'll not have my peace of mind destroyed by the best man that ever trod. Oh, yes! I know you don't care so long as you can appear well to all the world,—but the world

little thinks how you behave to me. It shall know it, though—that I'm determined.

"How any man can leave his own happy fireside to go and sit. and smoke, and drink, and talk with people who wouldn't one of 'em lift a finger to save him from hanging—how any man can leave his wife—and a good wife, too, though I say it—for a parcel of pot-companions—oh, it's disgraceful, Mr. Caudle; it's unfeeling. No man who had the least love for his wife could do it.

"And I suppose this is to be the case every Saturday? But I know what I'll do. I know—it's no use, Mr. Caudle, your calling me a good creature: I'm not such a fool as to be coaxed in that way. No; if you want to go to sleep, you should come home in Christian time, not at half-past twelve. There was a time, when you were as regular at your fireside as the kettle. That was when you were a decent man, and didn't go amongst Heaven knows who, drinking and smoking, and making what you think your jokes. I never heard any good come to a man who cared about jokes. No respectable tradesman does. But I know what I'll do: I'll scare away your Skylarks. The house serves liquor after twelve of a Saturday; and if I don't write to the magistrates, and have the license taken away, I'm not lying in this bed this night. Yes, you may call me a foolish woman; but no, Mr. Caudle, no; it's you who are the foolish man; or worse than a foolish man; you're a wicked one. If you were to die to-morrow—and people who go to public-houses do all they can to shorten their lives—I should like to know who would write upon your tombstone, 'A tender husband and an affectionate father?' *I*——I'd have no such falsehoods told of you, I can assure you.

"Going and spending your money, and—nonsense! don't tell me—no, if you were ten times to swear it, I wouldn't believe that you only spent eighteen-pence on a Saturday. You can't be all those hours, and only spend eighteen-pence. I know better. I'm not quite a fool, Mr. Caudle. A great deal you could have for eighteen-pence! And all the Club married men and fathers of families. The more shame for 'em! Skylarks, indeed! They should call themselves Vultures; for they can only do as they do by eating up their innocent wives and children. Eighteen-pence a week! And if it was only that,—do you know what fifty-two eighteen-pences come to in a year? Do you ever think of that, and see the gowns I wear? I'm sure I can't, out of the house-money, buy myself a pincushion; though I've wanted one these six months. No—not so much as a ball of cotton. But what do you care so you can get your brandy-and-water? There's the girls, too—the things they want! They're never dressed like

other people's children. But it's all the same to their father. Oh yes! So he can go with his Skylarks they may wear sackcloth for pinafores, and packthread for garters.

"You'd better not let that Mr. Prettyman come here, that's all; or, rather, you'd better bring him once. Yes, I should like to see him. He wouldn't forget it. A man who, I may say, lives and moves only in a spittoon. A man who has a pipe in his mouth as constant as his front teeth. A sort of tavern king, with a lot of fools, like you, to laugh at what he thinks his jokes, and give him consequence. No, Mr. Caudle, no; it's no use your telling me to go to sleep, for I won't. Go to sleep, indeed! I'm sure it's almost time to get up. I hardly know what's the use of coming to bed at all now.

"The Skylarks, indeed! I suppose you'll be buying a 'Little Warbler,' and at your time of life, be trying to sing. The peacocks will sing next. A pretty name you'll get in the neighbourhood; and, in a very little time, a nice face you'll have. Your nose is getting redder already: and you've just one of the noses that liquor always flies to. *You don't see it's red?* No—I dare say not—but *I* see it; *I* see a great many things you don't. And so you'll go on. In a little time, with your brandy-and-water—don't tell me that you only take two small glasses: I know what men's two small glasses are; in a little time you'll have a face all over as if it was made of red currant jam. And I should like to know who's to endure you then? I won't, and so don't think it. Don't come to me.

"Nice habits men learn at clubs! There's Joskins: he was a decent creature once, and now I'm told he has more than once boxed his wife's ears. He's a Skylark too. And I suppose, some day, you'll be trying to box *my* ears? Don't attempt it, Mr. Caudle; I say don't attempt it. Yes—it's all very well for you to say you don't mean it,—but I only say again, don't attempt it. You'd rue it till the day of your death, Mr. Caudle.

"Going and sitting for four hours at a tavern! What men, unless they had their wives with them, can find to talk about, I can't think. No good, of course.

"Eighteen-pence a week—and drinking brandy-and-water, enough to swim a boat! And smoking like the funnel of a steam-ship! And I can't afford myself so much as a piece of tape! It's brutal, Mr. Caudle. It's ve-ve-ve—ry bru——tal."

"And here," says Caudle—"Here, thank Heaven! at last, she fell asleep."

LECTURE IV.

MR. CAUDLE HAS BEEN CALLED FROM HIS BED TO BAIL MR. PRETTYMAN FROM THE WATCH-HOUSE.

"YES, Mr. Caudle, I knew it would come to this. I said it would, when you joined those precious Skylarks. People being called out of their beds at all hours of the night, to bail a set of fellows who are never so happy as when they're leading sober men to destruction. I should like to know what the neighbours will think of you, with people from the police knocking at the door at two in the morning? Don't tell me that the man has been ill-used: he's not the man to be ill-used. And you must go and bail him! I know the end of that: he'll run away, and you'll have to pay the money. I should like to know what's the use of my working and slaving to save a farthing, when you throw away pounds upon your precious Skylarks. A pretty cold you'll have to-morrow morning, being called out of your warm bed this weather; but don't you think I'll nurse you—not I; not a drop of gruel do you get from me.

"I'm sure you've plenty of ways of spending your money—not throwing it away upon a set of dissolute peace-breakers. It's all very well for you to say you haven't thrown away your money, but you will. He'll be certain to run off; it isn't likely he'll go upon his trial, and you'll be fixed with the bail. Don't tell me there's no trial in the matter, because I know there is; it's for something more than quarrelling with the policeman that he was locked up. People arn't locked up for that. No, it's for robbery, or something worse, perhaps.

"And as you've bailed him, people will think you are as bad as he is. Don't tell me you couldn't help bailing him; you should have shown yourself a respectable man, and have let him been sent to prison.

"Now people know you're the friend of drunken and disorderly persons, you'll never have a night's sleep in your bed. Not that it would matter what fell upon you, if it wasn't your poor wife who suffered. Of course all the business will be in the newspapers, and your name with it. I shouldn't wonder, too, if they give your picture as they do the other folks of the Old Bailey. A pretty thing that, to go down to your children. I'm sure it will be enough to make them change their name. No, I shall *not go to* sleep; it's all very well for you to say, go to

sleep, after such a disturbance. But I shall not go to sleep, Mr. Caudle; certainly not."

"Her will, I have no doubt," says Caudle, "was strong; but nature was stronger, and she *did* sleep; this night inflicting upon me a remarkably short lecture."

LECTURE V.

MR. CAUDLE HAS REMAINED DOWN STAIRS TILL PAST ONE, WITH A FRIEND.

"PRETTY time of night to come to bed, Mr. Caudle. Ugh! As cold, too, as any ice. Enough to give any woman her death, I'm sure. What! *I shouldn't have locked up the coals?* If I hadn't, I've no doubt the fellow would have stayed all night. It's all very well for you, Mr. Caudle, to bring people home,—but I wish you'd think first what's for supper. That beautiful leg of pork would have served for our dinner to-morrow,—and now it's gone. *I* can't keep the house upon the money, and I won't pretend to do it, if you bring a mob of people every night to clear out the cup-board.

"I wonder who'll be so ready to give you a supper when you want one: for want one you will, unless you change your plans. Don't tell me! I know I'm right. You'll first be eaten up, and then you'll be laughed at. I know the world. No, indeed, Mr. Caudle, I don't think ill of everybody; don't say that. But I can't see a leg of pork eaten up in that way, without asking myself what it's all to end in if such things go on? And then he must have pickles, too! Couldn't be content with my cabbage—no, Mr. Caudle, I won't let you go to sleep. It's very well for you to say let you go to sleep, after you've kept me awake till this time. *Why did I keep awake?* How do you suppose I could go to sleep, when I knew that man was below drinking up your substance in brandy-and-water? for he couldn't be content upon decent, wholesome gin. Upon my word, you ought to be a rich man, Mr. Caudle. You have such very fine friends. I wonder who gives you brandy when you go out!

"No, indeed, he couldn't be content with my pickled cabbage—and I should like to know who makes better—but he must have walnuts. And you, too, like a fool—now, don't you think to stop me, Mr. Caudle; a poor woman may be trampled to death, and never say a word—you, too, like a fool—I wonder

who'd do it for you—to insist upon the girl going out for pickled walnuts. And in such a night too! With snow upon the ground. Yes; you're a man of fine feelings, you are, Mr. Caudle; but the world doesn't know you as I know you—fine feelings, indeed! to send the poor girl out, when I told you and told your friend, too—a pretty brute he is, I'm sure—that the poor girl had got a cold and I dare say chilblains on her toes. But I know what will be the end of that; she'll be laid up, and we shall have a nice doctor's bill. And you'll pay it, I can tell you—for *I* wont.

"*You wish you were out of the world?* Oh! yes, that's all very easy. I'm sure *I* might wish it. Don't swear in that dreadful way! Arn't you afraid that the bed will open and swallow you? And don't swing about in that way. *That* will do no good. *That* won't bring back the leg of pork, and the brandy you've poured down both of your throats. Oh, I know it. I'm sure of it. I only recollected it when I'd got into bed,—and if it hadn't been so cold, you'd have seen me down stairs again, I can tell you—I recollected it, and a pretty two hours I've passed—that I left the key in the cupboard,—and I know it—I could see by the manner of you, when you came into the room—I know you've got at the other bottle. However, there's one comfort: you told me to send for the best brandy—the very best—for your other friend, who called last Wednesday. Ha! ha! It was British—the cheapest British—and nice and ill I hope the pair of you will be to-morrow.

"There's only the bare bone of the leg of pork; but you'll get nothing else for dinner, I can tell you. It's a dreadful thing that the poor children should go without,—but, if they have such a father, they, poor things, must suffer for it.

"Nearly a whole leg of pork and a pint of brandy! A pint of brandy and a leg of pork."

LECTURE VI.

MR. CAUDLE HAS LENT AN ACQUAINTANCE THE FAMILY UMBRELLA.

"THAT'S the third umbrella gone since Christmas. *What were you to do?* Why let him go home in the rain, to be sure. I'm very certain there was nothing about *him* that could spoil. Take cold, indeed! He doesn't look like one of the sort to take cold. Besides, he'd have better taken cold than take our only umbrella. Do you hear the rain, Mr. Caudle? I say, do

you hear the rain? And as I'm alive, if it isn't St. Swithin's day! Do you hear it against the windows? Nonsense; you don't impose upon me. You can't be asleep with such a shower as that! Do you hear it, I say? Oh, you *do* hear it! Well, that's a pretty flood, I think, to last for six weeks; and no stirring all the time out of the house. Pooh! don't think me a fool, Mr. Caudle. Don't insult me. *He* return the umbrella! Anybody would think you were born yesterday. As if anybody ever *did* return an umbrella! There—do you hear it? Worse and worse? Cats and dogs, and for six weeks—always six weeks. And no umbrella!

"I should like to know how the children are to go to school to morrow? They shan't go through such weather, I'm determined. No: they shall stop at home and never learn anything—the blessed creatures!—sooner than go and get wet. And when they grow up, I wonder who they'll have to thank for knowing nothing—who, indeed, but their father? People who can't feel for their own children ought never to be fathers.

"But I know why you lent the umbrella. Oh, yes; I know very well. I was going out to tea at dear mother's to-morrow—you knew that; and you did it on purpose. Don't tell me; you hate me to go there, and take every mean advantage to hinder me. But don't you think it, Mr. Caudle. No, sir; if it comes down in buckets-full, I'll go all the more. No: and I won't have a cab. Where do you think the money's to come from? You've got nice high notions at that club of yours. A cab, indeed! Cost me sixteen-pence at least—sixteen-pence! two-and-eightpence, for there's back again. Cabs, indeed! I should like to know who's to pay for 'em; *I* can't pay for 'em, and I'm sure you can't, if you go on as you do; throwing away your property, and beggaring your children—buying umbrellas!

"Do you hear the rain, Mr. Caudle? I say, do you hear it? But I don't care—I'll go to mother's to morrow: I will; and what's more, I'll walk every step of the way,—and you know that will give me my death. Don't call me a foolish woman, it's you that's the foolish man. You know I can't wear clogs; and with no umbrella, the wet's sure to give me a cold—it always does. But what do you care for that? Nothing at all. I may be laid up for what you care, as I dare say I shall—and a pretty doctor's bill there'll be. I hope there will! It will teach you to lend your umbrellas again. I shouldn't wonder if I caught my death; yes: and that's what you lent the umbrella for. Of course!

"Nice clothes I shall get too, trapesing through weather like this. My gown and bonnet will be spoilt quite. *Needn't I wear*

'em then? Indeed, Mr. Caudle, I *shall* wear 'em. No, sir, I'm not going out a dowdy to please you or anybody else. Gracious knows! it isn't often that I step over the threshold; indeed, I might as well be a slave at once,—better, I should say. But when I do go out, Mr. Caudle, I choose to go like a lady. Oh! that rain—if it isn't enough to break in the windows.

"Ugh! I do look forward with dread for to-morrow! How I am to go to mother's I'm sure I can't tell. But if I die, I'll do it. No, sir; I won't borrow an umbrella. No; and you shan't buy one. Now, Mr. Caudle, only listen to this: if you bring home another umbrella, I'll throw it in the street. I'll have my own umbrella, or none at all.

"Ha! and it was only last week I had a new nozzle put to that umbrella. I'm sure, if I'd have known as much as I do now, it might have gone without one for me. Paying for new nozzles, for other people to laugh at you. Oh, it's all very well for you—you can go to sleep. You've no thought of your poor patient wife, and your own dear children. You think of nothing but lending umbrellas!

"Men, indeed!—call themselves lords of the creation!—pretty lords, when they can't even take care of an umbrella!

"I know that walk to-morrow will be the death of me. But that's what you want—then you may go to your club, and do as you like—and then, nicely my poor dear children will be used—but then, sir, then you'll be happy. Oh, don't tell me! I know you will. Else you'd never have lent the umbrella!

"You have to go on Thursday about that summons; and, of course, you can't go. No, indeed, you *don't* go without the umbrella. You may lose the debt for what I care—it won't be so much as spoiling your clothes—better lose it: people deserve to lose debts who lend umbrellas!

"And I should like to know how I'm to go to mother's without the umbrella? Oh, don't tell me that I said I *would* go—that's nothing to do with it; nothing at all. She'll think I'm neglecting her, and the little money we were to have, we shan't have at all—because we've no umbrella.

"The children, too! Dear things! They'll be sopping wet: for they shan't stop at home—they shan't lose their learning; it's all their father will leave 'em, I'm sure. But they *shall* go to school. Don't tell me I said they shouldn't: you are so aggravating, Caudle; you'd spoil the temper of an angel. They *shall* go to school; mark that. And if they get their deaths of cold, it's not my fault—I didn't lend the umbrella."

"*At length,*" writes Caudle, "I fell asleep; and dreamt that

the sky was turned into green calico, with whalebone ribs; that, in fact, the whole world turned round under a tremendous umbrella!"

LECTURE VII.

MR. CAUDLE HAS VENTURED A REMONSTRANCE ON HIS DAY'S DINNER: COLD MUTTON, AND NO PUDDING. MRS. CAUDLE DEFENDS THE COLD SHOULDER.

"I'm sure! Well! I wonder what it will be next? There's nothing proper, now—nothing at all. Better get somebody else to keep the house I think. I can't do it now, it seems; I'm only in the way here: I'd better take the children, and go.

"What am I grumbling about now? It's very well for you to ask that! I'm sure I'd better be out of the world than—there now, Mr. Caudle; there you are again! I *shall* speak, sir. It isn't often I open my mouth, Heaven knows! But you like to hear nobody talk but yourself. You ought to have married a negro slave, and not any respectable woman.

"You're to go about the house looking like thunder all the day, and I'm not to say a word. Where do you think pudding's to come from every day? You show a nice example to your children, you do; complaining, and turning your nose up at a sweet piece of cold mutton, because there's no pudding! You go a nice way to make 'em extravagant—teach 'em nice lessons to begin the world with. Do you know what puddings cost; or do you think they fly in at the window?

"You hate cold mutton. The more shame for you, Mr. Caudle. I'm sure you've the stomach of a lord, you have. No, sir; I didn't choose to hash the mutton. It's very easy for you to say hash it; but *I* know what a joint loses in hashing: it's a day's dinner the less, if it's a bit. Yes, I dare say; other people may have puddings with cold mutton. No doubt of it; and other people become bankrupts. But if ever you get into the Gazette, it shan't be *my* fault—no; I'll do my duty as a wife to you, Mr. Caudle: you shall never have it to say that it was *my* housekeeping that brought you to beggary. No; you may sulk at the cold meat—ha! I hope you'll never live to want such a piece of cold mutton as we had to-day! and you may threaten to go to a tavern to dine; but, with our present means, not a crumb of pudding do you get from me. You shall have nothing but the cold joint—nothing as I'm a Christian sinner.

"Yes; there you are, throwing those fowls in my face again! I know you once brought home a pair of fowls; I know it: and wer'n't you mean enough to want to stop 'em out of my week's money? Oh, the selfishness—the shabbiness of men! They can go out and throw away pounds upon pounds with a pack of people who laugh at 'em afterwards; but if it's anything wanted for their own homes, their poor wives may hunt for it. I wonder you don't blush to name those fowls again! I wouldn't be so little for the world, Mr. Caudle!

"What are you going to do? *Going to get up?* Don't make yourself ridiculous, Mr. Caudle; I can't say a word to you like any other wife, but you must threaten to get up. *Do* be ashamed of yourself.

"Puddings, indeed! Do you think I'm made of puddings? Didn't you have some boiled rice three weeks ago? Besides, is this the time of the year for puddings? It's all very well if I had money enough allowed me like any other wife to keep the house with: then, indeed, I might have preserves like any other woman; now, it's impossible; and it's cruel—yes, Mr. Caudle, cruel—of you to expect it.

"*Apples arn't so dear, are they?* I know what apples are, Mr. Caudle, without your telling me. But I suppose you want something more than apples for dumplings? I suppose sugar costs something, doesn't it? And that's how it is. That's how one expense brings on another, and that's how people go to ruin.

"*Pancakes?* What's the use of your lying muttering there about pancakes? Don't you always have 'em once a year—every Shrove Tuesday? And what would any moderate, decent man, want more?

"Pancakes, indeed! Pray, Mr. Caudle,—no, it's no use your saying fine words to me to let you go to sleep; I shan't!—pray do you know the price of eggs just now? There's not an egg you can trust to under seven and eight a shilling; well, you've only just to reckon up how many eggs—don't lie swearing there at the eggs, in that manner, Mr. Caudle; unless you expect the bed to let you fall through. You call yourself a respectable tradesman, I suppose? Ha! I only wish people knew you as well as I do! Swearing at eggs, indeed! But I'm tired of this usage, Mr. Caudle; quite tired of it; and I don't care how soon it's ended!

"I'm sure I do nothing but work and labour, and think how to make the most of everything: and this is how I'm rewarded. I should like to see anybody whose joints go further than mine. But if I was to throw away your money into the street, or lay it out in fine feathers on myself, I should be better thought of.

The woman who studies her husband and her family is always made a drudge of. It's your fine fal-lal wives who've the best time of it.

"What's the use of your lying groaning there in that manner? That won't make me hold my tongue I can tell you. You think to have it all your own way—but you won't, Mr. Caudle! You can insult my dinner; look like a demon, I may say, at a wholesome piece of cold mutton—ha! the thousands of far better creatures than you are who'd been thankful for that mutton!—and I'm never to speak! But you're mistaken—I will! Your usage of me, Mr. Caudle, is infamous—unworthy of a man. I only wish people knew you for what you are; but I've told you again and again they shall some day.

"Puddings! And now I suppose I shall hear of nothing but puddings! Yes, and I know what it would end in. First, you'd have a pudding every day;—oh, I know your extravagance—then you 'd go for fish—then I shouldn't wonder if you'd have soup; turtle, no doubt: then you'd go for a dessert; and—oh! I see it all as plain as the quilt before me—but no, not while I'm alive! What your second wife may do, I don't know; perhaps *she'll* be a fine lady; but you shan't be ruined by me, Mr. Caudle; that I'm determined. Puddings, indeed! Pu-dding-s! Pudd—"

"Exhausted nature," says Caudle, "could hold out no longer. She went to sleep."

LECTURE VIII.

CAUDLE HAS BEEN MADE A MASON.—MRS. CAUDLE INDIGNANT AND CURIOUS.

"Now, Mr. Caudle—Mr. Caudle, I say: oh! you can't be asleep already, I know—now, what I mean to say is this; there's no use, none at all, in our having any disturbance about the matter; but, at last my mind's made up, Mr. Caudle; I shall leave you. Either I know all you've been doing to-night, or to-morrow morning I quit the house. No, no; there's an end of the marriage-state, I think—an end of all confidence between man and wife—if a husband's to have secrets and keep 'em all to himself. Pretty secrets they must be, when his own wife can't know 'em! Not fit for any decent person to know, I'm sure, if that's the case. Now, Caudle, don't let us quarrel; there's a

good soul, tell me what's it all about? A pack of nonsense, I dare say; still—not that I care much about it—still, I *should* like to know. There's a dear. Eh? Oh, don't tell me there's nothing in it: I know better. I'm not a fool, Mr. Caudle; I know there's a good deal in it. Now, Caudle; just tell me a little bit of it. I'm sure I'd tell you anything. You know I would. Well?

"Caudle, you're enough to vex a saint! Now, don't you think you're going to sleep; because you're not. Do you suppose I'd ever suffered you to go and be made a mason, if I didn't suppose I was to know the secret, too? Not that it's anything to know, I dare say; and that's why I'm determined to know it.

"But I know what it is; oh yes, there can be no doubt. The secret is, to ill-use poor women; to tyrannise over 'em; to make 'em your slaves; especially your wives. It must be something of the sort, or you wouldn't be ashamed to have it known. What's right and proper never need be done in secret. It's an insult to a woman for a man to be a free-mason, and let his wife know nothing of it. But, poor soul! she's sure to know it somehow—for nice husbands they all make. Yes, yes; a part of the secret is to think better of all the world than their own wives and families. I'm sure men have quite enough to care for—that is, if they act properly—to care for them they have at home. They can't have much care to spare for the world besides.

"And I suppose they call you *Brother* Caudle? A pretty brother, indeed! Going and dressing yourself up in an apron like a turnpike man—for that's what you look like. And I should like to know what the apron's for? There must be something in it not very respectable, I'm sure. Well, I only wish I was Queen for a day or two. I'd put an end to free-masonry, and all such trumpery, I know.

"Now, come, Caudle; don't let's quarrel. Eh! You're not in pain, dear? What's it all about? What are you lying laughing there at? But I'm a fool to trouble my head about you.

"And you're not going to let me know the secret, eh? You mean to say,—you're not? Now, Caudle, you know it's a hard matter to put me in a passion—not that I care about the secret itself: no, I wouldn't give a button to know it, for it's all nonsense I'm sure. It isn't the secret I care about: it's the slight, Mr. Caudle; it's the studied insult that a man pays to his wife, when he thinks of going through the world keeping something to himself which he won't let her know. Man and wife one, indeed! I should like to know how that can be when a man's a mason—when he keeps a secret that sets him and his wife apart? Ha,

you men make the laws, and so you take good care to have all the best of 'em to yourselves: otherwise a woman ought to be allowed a divorce when a man becomes a mason: when he's got a sort of corner-cupboard in his heart—a secret place in his mind—that his poor wife isn't allowed to rummage!

"Caudle, you shan't close your eyes for a week—no, you shan't—unless you tell me some of it. Come, there's a good creature; there's a love. I'm sure, Caudle, I wouldn't refuse you anything—and you know it, or ought to know it by this time. I only wish I had a secret! To whom should I think of confiding it, but to my dear husband? I should be miserable to keep it to myself, and you know it. Now, Caudle?

"Was there ever such a man? A man, indeed! A brute!—yes, Mr. Caudle, an unfeeling, brutal creature, when you might oblige me, and you won't. I'm sure I don't object to your being a mason; not at all, Caudle; I dare say it's a very good thing; I dare say it is—it's only your making a secret of it that vexes me. But you'll tell me—you'll tell your own Margaret? You won't! You're a wretch, Mr. Caudle.

"But I know why: oh, yes, I can tell. The fact is, you're ashamed to let me know what a fool they've been making of you. That's it. You, at your time of life—the father of a family! I should be ashamed of myself, Caudle.

"And I suppose you'll be going to what you call your Lodge every night, now? Lodge, indeed! Pretty place it must be, where they don't admit women. Nice goings on, I dare say. Then you call one another brethren. Brethren! I'm sure you'd relations enough, you didn't want any more.

"But I know what all this masonry's about. It's only an excuse to get away from your wives and families, that you may feast and drink together, that's all. That's the secret. And to abuse women,—as if they were inferior animals, and not to be trusted. That's the secret; and nothing else.

"Now, Caudle, don't let us quarrel. Yes, I know you're in pain. Still Caudle, my love; Caudle! Dearest, I say! Caudle!"

"I recollect nothing more," says Caudle, "for I had eaten a hearty supper, and somehow became oblivious."

LECTURE IX.

MR. CAUDLE HAS BEEN TO GREENWICH FAIR.

So, Mr. Caudle: I hope you enjoyed yourself at Greenwich. *How do I know you've been at Greenwich?* I know it very well, sir: know all about it: know more than you think I know. I thought there was something in the wind. Yes, I was sure of it, when you went out of the house, to-day. I knew it by the looks of you, though I didn't say anything. Upon my word! And you call yourself a respectable man, and the father of a family! Going to a fair among all sorts of people,—at your time of life. Yes; and never think of taking your wife with you. Oh no! you can go and enjoy yourself out, with *I* don't know who: go out, and make yourself very pleasant, I dare say. Don't tell me; I hear what a nice companion Mr. Caudle is: what a good-tempered person. Ha! I only wish people could see you at home, that 's all. But so it is with men. They can keep all their good temper for out-of-doors—their wives never see any of it. Oh dear! I'm sure I don't know who'd be a poor woman!

"Now, Caudle, I'm not in an ill temper; not at all. I know I used to be a fool when we were first married: I used to worry and fret myself to death when you went out; but I've got over that. I wouldn't put myself out of the way now for the best man that ever trod. For what thanks does a poor woman get? None at all. No: it's those who don't care for their families, who are the best thought of. I only wish I could bring myself not to care for mine.

"And why couldn't you say, like a man, you were going to Greenwich Fair when you went out? It's no use your saying that, Mr. Caudle: don't tell me that you didn't think of going; you'd made your mind up to it, and you know it. Pretty games you've had, no doubt! I should like to have been behind you, that's all. A man at your time of life!

"And I, of course, I never want to go out. Oh no! I may stay at home with the cat. You couldn't think of taking your wife and children, like any other decent man, to a fair. Oh no; you never care to be seen with us. I'm sure, many people don't know you're married at all: how can they? Your wife's never seen with you. Oh no; anybody but those belonging to you!

"Greenwich Fair, indeed! Yes,—and of course you went up and down the hill, running and racing with nobody knows who. Don't tell me; I know what you are when you're out. You

don't suppose, Mr. Caudle, I've forgotten that pink bonnet, do you? No: I won't hold my tongue, and I'm not a foolish woman. It's no matter, sir, if the pink bonnet was fifty years ago—it's all the same for that. No: and if I live for fifty years to come, I never will leave off talking of it. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mr. Caudle. Ha! few wives would have been what I've been to you. I only wish my time was to come over again, that's all; I wouldn't be the fool I have been.

"Going to a fair! and I suppose you had your fortune told by the gipsies? You needn't have wasted your money. I'm sure I can tell you your fortune if you go on as you do. Yes, the gaol will be your fortune, Mr. Caudle. And it would be no matter—none at all—if your wife and children didn't suffer with you.

"And then you must go riding upon donkeys.—*You didn't go riding upon donkeys?* Yes; it's very well for you to say so: but I dare say you did. I tell you, Caudle, I know what you are when you're out. I wouldn't trust any of you—you, especially, Caudle.

"Then you must go in the thick of the fair, and have the girls scratching your coat with rattles! *You couldn't help it, if they did scratch your coat?* Don't tell me; people don't scratch coats unless they're encouraged to do it. And you must go in a swing, too. *You didn't go in a swing?* Well, if you didn't, it was no fault of yours; you wished to go, I've no doubt.

"And then you must go into the shows? There,—you don't deny that. You did go into a show. *What of it, Mr. Caudle?*—A good deal of it, sir. Nice crowding and squeezing in those shows, I know. Pretty places! And you a married man and the father of a family. No, I won't hold my tongue. It's very well for you to threaten to get up. You're to go to Greenwich Fair, and race up and down the hill, and play at kiss in the ring. Pah! it's disgusting, Mr. Caudle. Oh, I dare say you *did* play at it; if you didn't, you'd have liked, and that's just as bad;—and you can go into swings, and shows, and roundabouts. If I was you, I should hide my head under the clothes, and be ashamed of myself.

"And what is most selfish—most mean of you, Caudle—you can go and enjoy yourself, and never so much as bring home for the poor children a gingerbread-nut. Don't tell me that your pocket was picked of a pound of nuts! Nice company you must have been in to have your pocket picked.

"But I dare say I shall hear all about it to-morrow. I've no doubt, sir, you were dancing at the Crown-and-Anchor. I should like to have seen you. No: I'm not making myself ridiculous. It's you that's making yourself ridiculous; and everybody that

knows you says so. Everybody knows what I have to put up with from you.

"Going to a fair, indeed! At your time——"

"Here," says Caudle, "I dozed off, hearing confusedly the words — hill — gipsies — rattles — roundabouts — swings — pink bonnet—nuts."

LECTURE X.

ON MR. CAUDLE'S SHIRT-BUTTONS.

Well, Mr. Caudle, I hope you're in a little better temper than you were this morning? There—you needn't begin to whistle: people don't come to bed to whistle. But it's like you. I can't speak, that you don't try to insult me. Once, I used to say you were the best creature living: now, you get quite a fiend. *Do let you rest?* No, I won't let you rest. It's the only time I have to talk to you, and you *shall* hear me. I'm put upon all day long: it's very hard if I can't speak a word at night: besides it isn't often I open my mouth, goodness knows!

"Because *once* in your lifetime your shirt wanted a button, you must almost swear the roof off the house! *You didn't swear?* Ha, Mr. Caudle! you don't know what you do when you're in a passion. *You were not in a passion?* Wer'n't you? Well, then, I don't know what a passion is—and I think I ought by this time. I've lived long enough with you, Mr. Caudle, to know that.

"It's a pity you haven't something worse to complain of than a button off your shirt. If you'd *some* wives, you would, I know. I'm sure I'm never without a needle-and-thread in my hand. What with you and the children, I'm made a perfect slave of. And what's my thanks? Why, if once in your life a button's off your shirt—what do you cry '*oh*' at?—I say once, Mr. Caudle; or twice, or three times, at most. I'm sure, Caudle, no man's buttons in the world are better looked after than your's. I only wish I had kept the shirts you had when you were first married! I should like to know where were your buttons then?

"Yes, it *is* worth talking of! But that's how you always try to put me down. You fly into a rage, and then if I only try to speak you won't hear me. That's how you men always will have all the talk to yourselves: a poor woman isn't allowed to get a word in.

"A nice notion you have of a wife, to suppose she's nothing to think of but her husband's buttons. A pretty notion, indeed,

you have of marriage. Ha! if poor women only knew what they had to go through! What with buttons, and one thing and another! They'd never tie themselves up,—no, not to the best man in the world, I'm sure. *What would they do, Mr. Caudle?* Why, do much better without you, I'm certain.

"And it's my belief, after all, that the button wasn't off the shirt; it's my belief that you pulled it off, that you might have something to talk about. Oh, you're aggravating enough, when you like, for anything! All I know is, it's very odd that the button should be off the shirt; for I'm sure no woman's a greater slave to her husband's buttons than I am. I only say, its very odd.

"However, there's one comfort; it can't last long. I'm worn to death with your temper, and shan't trouble you a great while. Ha, you may laugh! And I dare say you would laugh! I've no doubt of it! That's your love—that's your feeling! I know that I'm sinking every day, though I say nothing about it. And when I'm gone, we shall see how your second wife will look after your buttons. You'll find out the difference, then. Yes, Caudle, you'll think of me, then: for then, I hope, you'll never have a blessed button to your back.

"No, I'm not a vindictive woman, Mr. Caudle; nobody ever called me that, but you. What do you say? *Nobody ever knew so much of me?* That's nothing at all to do with it. Ha! I wouldn't have your aggravating temper, Caudle, for mines of gold. It's a good thing I'm not as worrying as you are—or a nice house there'd be between us. I only wish you'd had a wife that *would* have talked to you! Then you'd have known the difference. But you impose upon me, because, like a poor fool, I say nothing. I should be ashamed of myself, Caudle.

"And a pretty example you set as a father! You'll make your boys as bad as yourself. Talking as you did all breakfast-time about your buttons! And of a Sunday morning too! And you call yourself a Christian! I should like to know what your boys will say of you when they grow up? And all about a paltry button off one of your wristbands! A decent man wouldn't have mentioned it. *Why won't I hold my tongue?* Because I *won't* hold my tongue. I'm to have my peace of mind destroyed—I'm to be worried into my grave for a miserable shirt-button, and I'm to hold my tongue! Oh! but that's just like you men!

"But I know what I'll do for the future. Every button you have may drop off, and I won't so much as put a thread to 'em. And I should like to know what you'll do then? Oh, you must get somebody else to sew 'em, must you? That's a pretty threat

for a husband to hold out to a wife! And to such a wife as I've been, too: such a negro-slave to your buttons, as I may say! Somebody else to sew 'em, eh? No, Caudle, no: not while I'm alive! When I'm dead—and with what I have to bear there's no knowing how soon that may be—when I'm dead, I say—oh! what a brute you must be to snore so!

"*You're not snoring?* Ha! that's what you always say; but that's nothing to do with it. You must get somebody else to sew 'em, must you? Ha! I shouldn't wonder. Oh no! I should be surprised at nothing, now! Nothing at all! It's what people have always told me it would come to,—and now, the buttons have opened my eyes! But the whole world shall know of your cruelty, Mr. Caudle. After the wife I've been to you. Somebody else, indeed, to sew your buttons! I'm no longer to be mistress in my own house! Ha, Caudle! I wouldn't have upon my conscience what you have, for the world! I wouldn't treat anybody as you treat—no, I'm not mad! It's you, Mr. Caudle, who are mad, or bad—and that's worse! I can't even so much as speak of a shirt-button, but that I'm threatened to be made nobody of in my own house! Caudle, you've a heart like a hearth-stone, you have! To threaten me, and only because a button—a button——"

"I was conscious of no more than this," says Caudle; "for here nature relieved me with a sweet, deep sleep."

LECTURE XI.

MRS. CAUDLE SUGGESTS THAT HER DEAR MOTHER SHOULD "COME AND LIVE WITH THEM."

"Is your cold better to-night, Caudle? Yes; I thought it was. 'Twill be quite well to-morrow, I dare say. There's a love! You don't take care enough of yourself, Caudle, you don't. And you ought, I'm sure; if only for my sake. For whatever I should do, if anything was to happen to you—but I won't think of it; no, I can't bear to think of *that*. Still, you ought to take care of yourself; for you know you're not strong, Caudle; you know you're not.

"Wasn't dear mother so happy with us, to-night? Now, you needn't go to sleep, so suddenly. I say, wasn't she so happy? *You don't know?* How can you say you don't know? You must have seen it. But she always is happier here than anywhere else.

Ha! what a temper that dear soul has! I call it a temper of satin; it is so smooth, so easy, and so soft. Nothing puts her out of the way. And then, if you only knew how she takes your part, Caudle! I'm sure, if you had been her own son ten times over, she couldn't be fonder of you. Don't you think so, Caudle? Eh, love? Now, do answer. *How can you tell?* Nonsense, Caudle; you must have seen it. I'm sure, nothing delights the dear soul so much as when she's thinking how to please you.

"Don't you remember Thursday night, the stewed oysters when you came home? That was all dear mother's doings! 'Margaret,' says she to me, 'it's a cold night; and don't you think dear Mr. Caudle would like something nice before he goes to bed?' And that, Caudle, is how the oysters came about. Now, don't sleep, Caudle: do listen to me, for five minutes; 'tisn't often I speak, goodness knows.

"And then, what a fuss she makes when you're out, if your slippers arn't put to the fire for you. *She's very good?* Yes—I know she is, Caudle. And hasn't she been six months—though I promised her not to tell you—six months, working a watch-pocket for you! And with *her* eyes, dear soul—and at *her* time of life!

"And then what a cook she is! I'm sure, the dishes she'll make out of next to nothing! I try hard enough to follow her: but, I'm not ashamed to own it, Caudle, she quite beats me. Ha! the many nice little things she'd simmer up for you—and I can't do it; the children, you know it, Caudle, take so much of my time. I can't do it, love: and I often reproach myself that I can't. Now, you shan't go to sleep, Caudle; at least, not for five minutes. You must hear me.

"I've been thinking, dearest—ha! that nasty cough, love!—I've been thinking, darling, if we could only persuade dear mother to come and live with us. Now, Caudle, you can't be asleep; it's impossible—you were coughing only this minute—yes, to live with us. What a treasure we should have in her! Then, Caudle, you never need go to bed without something nice and hot. And you want it, Caudle. *You don't want it?* Nonsense, you do; for you're not strong, Caudle; you know you're not.

"I'm sure, the money she'd save us in housekeeping. Ha! what an eye she has for a joint! The butcher doesn't walk that could deceive dear mother. And then, again, for poultry! What a finger and thumb she has for a chicken! I never could market like her: it's a gift—quite a gift.

"And then you recollect her marrow-puddings? *You don't recollect 'em?* Oh, fie! Caudle, how often have you flung her marrow-puddings in my face, wanting to know why I couldn't make 'em? And I wouldn't pretend to do it after dear mother.

I should think it presumption. Now, love, if she was only living with us—come, you're not asleep, Caudle—if she was only living with us, you could have marrow-puddings every day. Now, don't fling yourself about and begin to swear at marrow-puddings; you know you like 'em, dear.

"What a hand, too, dear mother has for a pie-crust? But it's born with some people. What do you say? *Why wasn't it born with me?* Now, Caudle, that's cruel—unfeeling of you; I wouldn't have uttered such a reproach to you for the whole world. Consider, dear; people can't be born as they like.

"How often, too, have you wanted to brew at home! And I never could learn anything about brewing. But, ha! what ale dear mother makes! *You never tasted it?* No, I know that. But I recollect the ale we used to have at home: and father never would drink wine after it. The best sherry was nothing like it. *You dare say not?* No; it wasn't indeed, Caudle. Then, if dear mother was only with us, what money we should save in beer! And then you might always have your own nice, pure, good, wholesome ale, Caudle: and what good it would do you! For you're not strong, Caudle.

"And then dear mother's jams and preserves, love! I own it, Caudle; it has often gone to my heart that with cold meat you hav'n't always had a pudding. Now, if mother was with us, in the matter of fruit puddings, she'd make it summer all the year round. But I never could preserve—now mother does it, and for next to no money whatever. What nice dogs-in-a-blanket she'd make for the children! *What's dogs-in-a-blanket?* Oh, they're delicious—as dear mother makes 'em.

"Now, you *have* tasted her Irish stew, Caudle? You remember that? Come, you're not asleep—you remember that? And how fond you are of it! And I know I never have it made to please you! Well, what a relief to me it would be if dear mother was always at hand that you might have a stew when you liked. What a load it would be off my mind.

"Again, for pickles! Not at all like anybody else's pickles. Her red cabbage—why it's as crisp as biscuit! And then her walnuts—and her all-sorts! Eh, Caudle? You know how you love pickles; and how we sometimes tiff about 'em? Now if dear mother was here, a word would never pass between us. And I'm sure nothing would make me happier, for—you're not asleep, Caudle?—for I can't bear to quarrel, can I, love?

"The children, too, are so fond of her! And she'd be such a help to me with 'em! I'm sure, with dear mother in the house, I shouldn't care a fig for measles, or anything of the sort. As a nurse, she's such a treasure!

"And at her time of life, what a needlewoman! And the darning and mending for the children, it really gets quite beyond me now, Caudle. Now with mother at my hand, there wouldn't be a stitch wanted in the house.

"And then when you're out late, Caudle—for I know you must be out late, sometimes; I can't expect you, of course, to be always at home—why then dear mother could sit up for you, and nothing would delight the dear soul half so much.

"And so, Caudle, love, I think dear mother had better come, don't you? Eh, Caudle? Now, you're not asleep, darling; don't you think she'd better come? You say *No?* You say *No* again? *You won't have her*, you say; *You won't, that's flat!* Caudle—Cau-Cau-dle—Cau—dle—"

"Here Mrs. Caudle," says her husband, "suddenly went into tears; and I went to sleep."

LECTURE XII.

MR. CAUDLE, HAVING COME HOME A LITTLE LATE, DECLARES THAT HENCEFORTH "HE WILL HAVE A KEY."

"Upon my word, Mr. Caudle, I think it a waste of time to come to bed at all now! The cocks will be crowing in a minute. *Why did I sit up, then?* Because I choose to sit up—but that's my thanks. No, it's no use your talking, Caudle; I never *will* let the girl sit up for you, and there's an end. What do you say? *Why does she sit up with me, then?* That's quite a different matter: you don't suppose I'm going to sit up alone, do you? What do you say? *What's the use of two sitting up?* That's my business. No, Caudle, it's no such thing. I *don't* sit up because I may have the pleasure of talking about it; and you're an ungrateful, unfeeling creature, to say so. I sit up because I choose it; and if you don't come home all the night long—and 'twill soon come to that, I've no doubt—still, I'll never go to bed, so don't think it.

"Oh yes! the time runs away very pleasantly with you men at your clubs—selfish creatures! You can laugh and sing, and tell stories, and never think of the clock; never think there's such a person as a wife belonging to you. It's nothing to you that a poor woman's sitting up, and telling the minutes, and seeing all sorts of things in the fire—and sometimes thinking that something dreadful has happened to you—more fool she to

care a straw about you!—This is all nothing. Oh no! when a woman's once married she's a slave—worse than a slave—and must bear it all!

"And what you men can find to talk about I can't think! Instead of a man sitting every night at home with his wife, and going to bed at a Christian hour,—going to a club, to meet a set of people who don't care a button for him—it's monstrous! What do you say? *You only go once a week?* That's nothing at all to do with it: you might as well go every night; and I dare say you will soon. But if you do, you may get in as you can: *I* won't sit up for you, I can tell you.

"My health's being destroyed night after night, and—oh, don't say it's only once a week; I tell you, that's nothing to do with it—if you had any eyes, you would see how ill I am; but you've no eyes for anybody belonging to you: oh no! your eyes are for people out of doors. It's very well for you to call me a foolish, aggravating woman! I should like to see the woman who'd sit up for you as I do. *You didn't want me to sit up?* Yes, yes; that's your thanks—that's your gratitude: I'm to ruin my health, and to be abused for it. Nice principles you've got at that club, Mr. Caudle!

"But there's one comfort—one great comfort; it can't last long: I'm sinking—I feel it, though I never say anything about it—but I know my own feelings, and I say it can't last long. And then I should like to know who will sit up for you! Then I should like to know how your second wife—what do you say? *You'll never be troubled with another?* Troubled, indeed! *I* never troubled you, Caudle. No; it's you who've troubled me; and you know it; though like a foolish woman I've borne it all, and never said a word about it. But it *can't* last—that's one blessing!

"Oh, if a woman could only know what she'd have to suffer, before she was married—Don't tell me you want to go to sleep! If you want to go to sleep, you should come home at proper hours! It's time to get up, for what I know, now. Shouldn't wonder if you hear the milk in five minutes—there's the sparrows up already; yes, I say the sparrows; and, Caudle, you ought to blush to hear 'em. *You don't hear 'em?* Ha! you won't hear 'em, you mean: *I* hear 'em. No, Mr. Caudle; it *isn't* the wind whistling in the key-hole; I'm not quite foolish, though you may think so. I hope I know wind from a sparrow!

"Ha! when I think what a man you were before we were married! But you're now another person—quite an altered creature. But I suppose you're all alike—I dare say, every poor woman's troubled and put upon, though I should hope not so

much as I am. Indeed, I should hope not! Going and staying out, and—

"What! *You'll have a key?* Will you? Not while I'm alive, Mr. Caudle. I'm not going to bed with the door upon the latch for you or the best man breathing. *You won't have a latch—you'll have a Chubb's lock?* Will you? I'll have no Chubb here, I can tell you. What do you say? *You'll have the lock put on to-morrow?* Well, try it; that's all I say, Caudle; try it. I won't let you put me in a passion; but all I say is,—try it.

"A respectable thing, that, for a married man to carry about with him,—a street-door key! That tells a tale, I think. A nice thing for the father of a family! A key! What, to let yourself in and out when you please! To come in, like a thief in the middle of the night, instead of knocking at the door like a decent person! Oh, don't tell me that you only want to prevent me sitting up,—if I choose to sit up, what's that to you? Some wives, indeed, would make a noise about sitting up, but *you've* no reason to complain,—goodness knows!

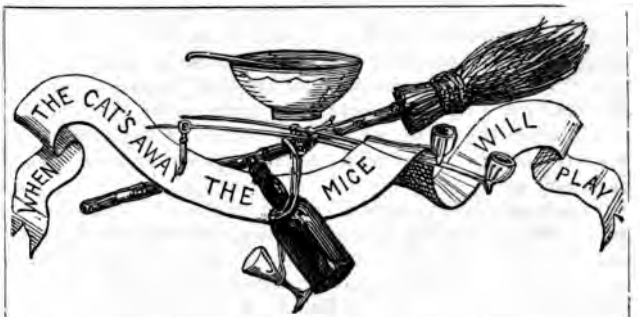
"Well, upon my word, I've lived to hear something. Carry the street-door key about with you! I've heard of such things with young good-for-nothing bachelors, with nobody to care what became of 'em; but for a married man to leave his wife and children in a house with the door upon the latch—don't talk to me about Chubb, it's all the same—a great deal you must care for us. Yes, it's very well for you to say, that you only want the key for peace and quietness—what's it to you, if I like to sit up? You've no business to complain; it can't distress you. Now, it's no use your talking; all I say is this, Caudle: if you send a man to put on any lock here, I'll call in a policeman; as I'm your married wife, I will!

"No, I think when a man comes to have the street-door key, the sooner he turns bachelor altogether the better. I'm sure, Caudle, I don't want to be any clog upon you. Now, it's no use your telling me to hold my tongue, for I—What? *I give you the head-ache, do I?* No, I don't, Caudle: it's your club that gives you the head-ache: it's your smoke, and your—well! if ever I knew such a man in all my life! there's no saying a word to you! You go out, and treat yourself like an emperor—and come home at twelve at night, or any hour, for what I know,—and then you threaten to have a key, and—and—and——"

"I *did* get to sleep at last," says Caudle, "amidst the falling sentences of 'take children into a lodging'—'separate maintenance'—'won't be made a slave of'—and so forth."

LECTURE XIII.

MRS. CAUDLE HAS BEEN TO SEE HER DEAR MOTHER. CAUDLE, ON THE "JOYFUL OCCASION," HAS GIVEN A PARTY, AND ISSUED THE SUBJOINED CARD OF INVITATION.



Mr. Caudle's *compliments to* Mr. Henry Prettyman, *and expects to have the honour of his company on this joyful occasion, at half-past Eight o'Clock.*

"It *is* hard, I think, Mr. Caudle, that I can't leave home for a day or two, but the house must be turned into a tavern: a tavern? —a pothouse! Yes, I thought you were very anxious that I should go; I thought you wanted to get rid of me for something, or you would not have insisted on my staying at dear mother's all night. You were afraid I should get cold coming home, were you? Oh yes, you can be very tender, you can, Mr. Caudle, when it suits your own purpose. Yes! and the world thinks what a good husband you are! I only wish the world knew you as well as I do, that's all; but it shall, some day, I'm determined.

"I'm sure the house will not be sweet for a month. All the curtains are poisoned with smoke; and, what's more, with the filthiest smoke I ever knew. *Take 'em down, then?* Yes, it's all very well for you to say, take 'em down; but they were only

cleaned and put up a month ago; but a careful wife's lost upon you, Mr. Caudle. You ought to have married somebody who'd have let your house go to wreck and ruin, as I will for the future. People who don't care for their families are better thought of than those who do; I've long found out *that*.

"And what a condition the carpet's in! They've taken five pounds out of it, if a farthing, with their filthy boots, and I don't know what besides. And then the smoke in the hearth-rug, and a large cinder-hole burnt in it! I never saw such a house in *my* life! If you wanted to have a few friends, why couldn't you invite 'em when your wife's at home, like any other man? not have 'em sneaking in, like a set of housebreakers, directly a woman turns her back. They must be pretty gentlemen, they must; mean fellows, that are afraid to face a woman! Ha! and you all call yourselves the lords of the creation! I should only like to see what would become of the creation, if you were left to yourselves! A pretty pickle creation would be in very soon!

"You must all have been in a nice condition? What do you say? *You took nothing?* Took nothing, didn't you? I'm sure there's such a regiment of empty bottles, I havn't had the heart to count 'em. And punch, too! you must have punch! There's a hundred half-lemons in the kitchen, if there's one: for Susan, like a good girl, kept 'em to show 'em me. No, sir; Susan *shan't leave the house!* What do you say? *She has no right to tell tales, and you* WILL *be master of your own house?* Will you? If you don't alter, Mr. Caudle, you'll soon have no house to be master of. A whole loaf of sugar did I leave in the cupboard, and now there isn't as much as would fill a tea-cup. Do you suppose I'm to find sugar for punch for fifty men? What do you say? *There wasn't fifty?* That's no matter; the more shame for 'em, sir. I'm sure they drunk enough for fifty. Do you suppose out of my housekeeping money I'm to find sugar for punch for all the world? *You don't ask me?* Don't you ask me? You do; you know you do: for if I only want a shilling extra, the house is in a blaze. And yet a whole loaf of sugar can you throw away upon——No, I *won't* be still; and I *won't* let you go to sleep. If you'd got to bed at a proper hour last night, you wouldn't have been so sleepy now. You can sit up half the night with a pack of people who don't care for you, and your poor wife can't get in a word!

"And there's that China image that I had when I was married—I wouldn't have taken any sum of money for it, and you know it—and how do I find it? With its precious head knocked off! And what was more mean, more contemptible than all besides,

it was put on again, as if nothing had happened. *You knew nothing about it?* Now, how can you lie there, in your Christian bed, Caudle, and say that? You know that that fellow, Prettyman, knocked off the head with the poker! You know that he did. And you hadn't the feeling,—yes, I will say it,—you hadn't the feeling to protect what you knew was precious to me. Oh no, if the truth was known, you were glad to see it broken for that very reason.

"Every way, I 've been insulted. I should like to know who it was who corked whiskers on my dear aunt's picture? Oh! you're laughing, are you? *You're not laughing?* Don't tell me that. I should like to know what shakes the bed, then, if you're not laughing? Yes, corked whiskers on her dear face,—and she was a good soul to you, Caudle, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself to see her ill-used. Oh, you may laugh! It's very easy to laugh! I only wish you'd a little feeling, like other people, that's all.

"Then there's my china mug—the mug I had before I was married—when I was a happy creature. I should like to know who knocked the spout off that mug? Don't tell me it was cracked before—it's no such thing, Caudle; there wasn't a flaw in it—and now, I could have cried when I saw it. Don't tell me it wasn't worth twopence. How do you know? You never buy mugs. But that's like men; they think nothing in a house costs anything.

"There's four glasses broke, and nine cracked. At least, that's all I've found out at present; but I dare say I shall discover a dozen to-morrow.

"And I should like to know where the cotton umbrella's gone to—and I should like to know who broke the bell-pull—and perhaps you don't know there's a leg off a chair,—and perhaps—"

"I was resolved," says Caudle, "to know nothing, and so went to sleep in my ignorance."

LECTURE XIV.

MRS. CAUDLE THINKS IT "HIGH TIME" THAT THE CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE SUMMER CLOTHING.

If there's anything in the world I hate—and you know it, Caudle—it is asking you for money. I am sure, for myself, I'd rather go without a thing a thousand times, and I do—the more shame of you to let me, but—there, now! there you fly out again! *What do I want now?* Why, you must know what's wanted, if you'd any eyes—or any pride for your children, like any other father. *What's the matter—and what am I driving at?* Oh, nonsense, Caudle! As if you didn't know! I'm sure if I'd any money of my own, I'd never ask you for a farthing; never; it's painful to me, goodness knows! What do you say? *If it's painful, why so often do it?* Ha! I suppose you call that a joke—one of your club jokes? I wish you'd think a little more of people's feelings, and less of your jokes. As I say, I only wish I'd any money of my own. If there is anything that humbles a poor woman, it is coming to a man's pocket for every farthing It's dreadful!

"Now, Caudle, if ever you kept awake, you shall keep awake to-night—yes, you shall hear me, for it isn't often I speak, and then you may go to sleep as soon as you like. Pray do you know what month it is? And did you see how the children looked at church to-day—like nobody else's children? *What was the matter with them?* Oh, Caudle! How can you ask? Poor things! weren't they all in their thick merinos, and beaver bonnets? What do you say—*What of it?* What! you'll tell me that you didn't see how the Briggs's girls, in their new chips, turned their noses up at 'em? And you didn't see how the Browns looked at the Smiths, and then at our dear girls, as much as to say, 'Poor creatures! what figures for the month of May!' *You didn't see it?* The more shame for you—you would, if you'd had the feelings of a parent—but I'm sorry to say, Caudle, you haven't. I'm sure those Briggs's girls—the little minxes!—put me into such a pucker, I could have pulled their ears for 'em over the pew. What do you say? *I ought to be ashamed of myself to own it?* No, Mr. Caudle: the shame lies with you, that don't let your children appear at church like other people's children; that make 'em uncomfortable at their devotions, poor things; for

how can it be otherwise, when they see themselves dressed like nobody else?

"Now, Caudle, it's no use talking; those children shall not cross the threshold next Sunday, if they haven't things for the summer. Now mind—they shan't; and there's an end of it. I won't have 'em exposed to the Briggses and the Browns again: no, they shall know they have a mother, if they've no father to feel for 'em. What do you say, Caudle? *A good deal I must think of church, if I think so much of what we go in?* I only wish you thought as much as I do, you'd be a better man than you are, Caudle, I can tell you; but that's nothing to do with it. I'm talking about decent clothes for the children for the summer, and you want to put me off with something about the church; but that's so like you, Caudle!

"*I'm always wanting money for clothes?* How can you lie in your bed and say that? I'm sure there's no children in the world that cost their father so little: but that's it; the less a poor woman does upon, the less she may. It's the wives who don't care where the money comes from who're best thought of. Oh, if my time was to come over again, would I mend and stitch, and make the things go so far as I have done? No—that I wouldn't. Yes, it's very well for you to lie there and laugh; it's easy to laugh, Caudle—very easy, to people who don't feel.

"Now, Caudle, dear! What a man you are! I know you'll give me the money, because, after all, I think you love your children, and like to see 'em well dressed. It's only natural that a father should. Eh, Caudle, eh! Now you shan't go to sleep till you've told me. *How much money do I want?* Why, let me see, love. There's Caroline, and Jane, and Susannah, and Mary Anne, and—What do you say? *I needn't count 'em, you know how many there are?* Ha! that's just as you take me up. Well, how much money will it take? Let me see; and don't go to sleep. I'll tell you in a minute. You always love to see the dear things like new pins, I know that, Caudle; and though I say it—bless their little hearts!—they do credit to you, Caudle. Any nobleman of the land might be proud of 'em. Now don't swear at noblemen of the land, and ask me what they've to do with your children; you know what I meant. But you *are* so hasty, Caudle.

"*How much?* Now, don't be in a hurry! Well, I think, with good pinching—and you know, Caudle, there's never a wife who can pinch closer than I can—I think, with pinching, I can do with twenty pounds. What did you say? *Twenty fiddlesticks?* What? *You won't give half the money?* Very well, Mr. Caudle; I don't care: let the children go in rags; let them stop from

church, and grow up like heathens and cannibals, and then you'll save your money, and, I suppose, be satisfied. *You gave me twenty pounds five months ago!* What's five months ago to do with now? Besides, what I *have* had is nothing to do with it.

"What do you say? *Ten pounds are enough?* Yes: just like you men; you think things cost nothing for women; but you don't care how much you lay out upon yourselves. *They only want bonnets and frocks?* How do you know what they want? *How* should a man know anything at all about it? And you won't give more than ten pounds? Very well. Then you may go shopping with it yourself, and see what *you'll* make of it. I'll have none of your ten pounds, I can tell you. No, sir,—no; you have no cause to say that. *I don't want to dress the children up like countesses?* You often fling that in my teeth, you do: but you know it's false, Caudle; you know it. I only want to give 'em proper notions of themselves: and what, indeed, *can* the poor things think when they see the Briggses, and the Browns, and the Smiths—and their fathers don't make the money you do, Caudle—when they see them as fine as tulips? Why, they must think themselves nobody; and to think yourself nobody,—depend upon it, Caudle,—isn't the way to make the world think anything of you.

"What do you say? *Where did I pick up that?* Where do you think? I know a great deal more than you suppose—yes; though you don't give me credit for it. Husbands seldom do. However, the twenty pounds I *will* have, if I've any—or not a farthing.

"No, sir, no. *I don't want to dress up the children like peacocks and parrots!* I only want to make 'em respectable and—what do you say? *You'll give fifteen pounds?* No, Caudle, no—not a penny will I take under twenty; if I did, it would seem as if I wanted to waste your money: and I'm sure, when I come to think of it, twenty pounds will hardly do. Still, if you'll give me twenty—no, it's no use your offering fifteen, and wanting to go to sleep. You shan't close an eye until you promise the twenty. Come, Caudle, love!—twenty, and then you may go to sleep. Twenty—twenty—twenty—"

"My impression is," writes Caudle, "that I fell asleep sticking firmly to the fifteen; but in the morning Mrs. Caudle assured me, as a woman of honour, that she wouldn't let me wink an eye, before I promised the twenty: and man is frail—and woman is strong—she had the money."

LECTURE XV.

MR. CAUDLE HAS AGAIN STAYED OUT LATE. MRS. CAUDLE, AT FIRST INJURED AND VIOLENT, MELTS.

"PERHAPS, Mr. Caudle, you'll tell me where this is to end? Though, goodness knows, I needn't ask *that*. The end is plain enough. Out—out—out! Every night—every night! I'm sure, men who can't come home at reasonable hours have no business with wives: they have no right to destroy other people, if they choose to go to destruction themselves. Ha, lord! Oh, dear! I only hope none of my girls will ever marry—I hope they'll none of 'em ever be the slave their poor mother is: they shan't, if I can help it. What do you say? *Nothing?* Well, I don't wonder at that, Mr. Caudle; you ought to be ashamed to speak; I don't wonder that you can't open your mouth. I'm only astonished that at such hours you have the confidence to knock at your own door. Though I'm your wife, I must say it, I do sometimes wonder at your impudence. What do you say? *Nothing?* Ha! you are an aggravating creature, Caudle; lying there like the mummy of a man, and never as much as opening your lips to one. Just as if your own wife wasn't worth answering! It isn't so when you're out, I'm sure. Oh no! then you can talk fast enough; here, there's no getting a word from you. But you treat your wife as no other man does—and you know it.

"Out—out every night! What? *You haven't been out this week before?* That's nothing at all to do with it. You might just as well be out all the week as once—just! And I should like to know what could keep you out till these hours? *Business?* Oh, yes—I dare say! Pretty business a married man and the father of a family must have out of doors at one in the morning. What! *I shall drive you mad?* Oh, no; you haven't feelings enough to go mad—you'd be a better man, Caudle, if you had. *Will I listen to you?* What's the use? Of course you've some story to put me off with—you can all do that, and laugh at us afterwards.

"No, Caudle, don't say that. I'm not always trying to find fault—not I. It's you. I never speak but when there's occasion; and what in my time I've put up with, there isn't anybody in the world that knows. *Will I hear your story?* Oh, you may tell it if you please; go on: only mind, I shan't believe a word of it.

I'm not such a fool as other women are, I can tell you. There, now—don't begin to swear—but go on——

"——And that's your story, is it? That's your excuse for the hours you keep! That's your apology for undermining my health and ruining your family! What do you think your children will say of you when they grow up—going and throwing away your money upon good-for-nothing, pot-house acquaintance? *He's not a pot-house acquaintance?* Who is he, then? Come, you haven't told me that; but I know—it's that Prettyman! Yes, to be sure it is! Upon my life! Well, if I've hardly patience to lie in the same bed! I've wanted a silver teapot these five years, and you must go and throw away as much money as—what! *You haven't thrown it away?* Haven't you! Then my name's not Margaret, that's all I know!

"A man gets arrested, and because he's taken from his wife and family, and locked up, you must go and trouble your head with it! And you must be mixing yourself up with nasty sheriff's officers—pah! I'm sure you're not fit to enter a decent house—and go running from lawyer to lawyer to get bail, and settle the business, as you call it! A pretty settlement you'll make of it—mark my words! Yes—and to mend the matter, to finish it quite, you must be one of the bail! That any man who isn't a born fool should do such a thing for another! Do you think anybody would do as much for you? *Yes?* You say yes? Well, I only wish—just to show that I'm right—I only wish you were in a condition to try 'em. I should only like to see you arrested. You'd find the difference—*that* you would.

"What's other people's affairs to you? If you were locked up, depend upon it, there's not a soul would come near you. No; it's all very fine now, when people think there isn't a chance of your being in trouble—but I should only like to see what they'd say to you if *you* were in a sponging-house. Yes—I should enjoy *that*, just to show you that I'm always right. What do you say? *You think better of the world?* Ha! that would be all very well if you could afford it; but you're not in means, I know, to think so well of people as all that. And of course they only laugh at you. 'Caudle's an easy fool,' they cry—I know it as well as if I heard 'em—'Caudle's an easy fool, anybody may lead him.' Yes; anybody but his own wife;—and she—of course—is nobody.

"And now, everybody that's arrested will of course send to you. Yes, Mr. Caudle, you'll have your hands full now, no doubt of it. You'll soon know every sponging-house and every sheriff's officer in London. Your business will have to take care of itself; you'll have enough to do to run from lawyer to lawyer after the business of other people. Now, it's no use calling me a dear soul

—not a bit! No; and I shan't put it off till to-morrow. It isn't often I speak, but I *will* speak now.

"I wish that Prettyman had been at the bottom of the sea before—what? *It isn't Prettyman?* Ha! it's very well for you to say so; but I know it is; it's just like him. He looks like a man that's always in debt—that's always in a sponging-house. Anybody might swear it. I knew it from the very first time you brought him here—from the very night he put his nasty dirty wet boots on my bright steel fender. Any woman could see what the fellow was in a minute. Prettyman! A pretty gentleman, truly, to be robbing your wife and family!

"Why couldn't you let him stop in the sponging——Now don't call upon heaven in that way, and ask me to be quiet, for I won't. Why couldn't you let him stop there? He got himself in; he might have got himself out again. And you must keep me awake, ruin my sleep, my health, and, for what you care, my peace of mind. Ha! everybody but you can see how I'm breaking. You can do all this while you're talking with a set of low bailiffs! A great deal you must think of your children to go into a lawyer's office.

"And then you must be bail—you must be bound—for Mr. Prettyman! You may say, bound! Yes—you've your hands nicely tied, now. How he laughs at you—and serve you right! Why, in another week he'll be in the East Indies; of course, he will! And you'll have to pay his debts; yes, your children may go in rags, so that Mr. Prettyman—what do you say? *It isn't Prettyman?* I know better. Well, if it isn't Prettyman that's kept you out,—if it isn't Prettyman you're bail for,—who is it then? I ask, who is it then? What! *My brother? Brother Tom?* Oh, Caudle! dear Caudle—"

"It was too much for the poor soul," says Caudle; "she sobbed as if her heart would break, and I"—and here the MS. is blotted, as though Caudle himself had dropt tears as he wrote.

LECTURE XVI.

BABY IS TO BE CHRISTENED; MRS. CAUDLE CANVASSES THE MERITS OF PROBABLE GODFATHERS.

"COME, now, love, about baby's name? The dear thing's three months old, and not a name to its back yet. There you go again! Talk of it to-morrow! No; we'll talk of it to-night. There's no having a word with you in the day-time—but here you can't leave me. Now don't say you wish you could, Caudle; that's unkind, and not treating a wife—especially the wife I am to you—as she deserves. It isn't often that I speak; but I *do* believe you'd like never to hear the sound of my voice. I might as well have been born dumb!

"I suppose the baby *must* have a godfather; and so, Caudle, who shall we have? Who do you think will be able to do the most for it? No, Caudle, no; I'm not a selfish woman—nothing of the sort—but I hope I've the feelings of a mother; and what's the use of a godfather, if he gives nothing else to the child but a name? A child might almost as well not be christened at all. And so who shall we have? What do you say? *Anybody?* Arn't you ashamed of yourself, Caudle? Don't you think something will happen to you, to talk in that way? I don't know where you pick up such principles. I'm thinking who there is among our acquaintance who can do the most for the blessed creature, and you say,—'*Anybody!*' Caudle, you're quite a heathen.

"There's Wagstaff. No chance of his ever marrying, and he's very fond of babies. He's plenty of money, Caudle; and I think he might be got. Babies, I know it—babies are his weak side. Wouldn't it be a blessed thing to find our dear child in his will? Why don't you speak? I declare, Caudle, you seem to care no more for the child than if it was a stranger's. People who can't love children more than you do, ought never to have 'em. *You don't like Wagstaff?* No more do I much; but what's that to do with it? People who've their families to provide for, musn't think of their feelings. *I* don't like him; but then I'm a mother, and love my baby! *You won't have Wagstaff, and that's flat?* Ha, Caudle! you're like nobody else—not fit for this world, you're not.

"What do you think of Pugsby? I can't bear his wife; but that's nothing to do with it. *I* know my duty to my babe: I

wish other people did. What do you say? *Pugsby's a wicked fellow?* Ha! that's like you—always giving people a bad name. We musn't always believe what the world says, Caudle; it doesn't become us as Christians to do it. I only know that he hasn't chick or child; and, besides that, he's very strong interest in the Blue-coats; and so, if Pugsby——Now, don't fly out at the man in that manner. Caudle, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! You can't speak well of anybody. Where *do* you think to go to?

"What do you say, then, to Sniggins? Now, don't bounce round in that way, letting the cold air into the bed! What's the matter with Sniggins? *You wouldn't ask him a favour for the world?* Well, it's a good thing the baby has somebody to care for it: *I* will. What do you say? *I shan't?* I will, I can tell you. Sniggins, besides being a warm man, has good interest in the Customs; and there's nice pickings there, if one only goes the right way to get 'em. It's no use, Caudle, your fidgetting about—not a bit. I'm not going to have baby lost—sacrificed, I may say, like its brothers and sisters. *What do I mean by sacrificed?* Oh, you know what I mean very well. What have any of 'em got by their godfathers beyond a half-pint mug, a knife and fork, and spoon—and a shabby coat, that I know was bought second-hand, for I could almost swear to the place? And then there was your fine friend Hartley's wife—what did she give to Caroline? Why, a trumpery lace cap it made me blush to look at. What? *It was the best she could afford?* Then she'd no right to stand for the child. People who can't do better than that have no business to take the responsibility of godmother. They ought to know their duties better.

"Well, Caudle, you can't object to Goldman? *Yes, you do!* Was there ever such a man! What for? *He's a usurer and a hunks?* Well, I'm sure, you've no business in this world, Caudle; you have such high-flown notions. Why, isn't the man as rich as the bank? And as for his being a usurer,—isn't it all the better for those who come after him? I'm sure it's well there's some people in the world who save money, seeing the stupid creatures who throw it away. But you are the strangest man! I really believe you think money a sin, instead of the greatest blessing; for I can't mention any of our acquaintance that's rich—and I'm sure we don't know too many such people—that you haven't something to say against 'em. It's only beggars that you like—people with not a shilling to bless themselves. Ha! though you're my husband, I must say it—you're a man of low notions, Caudle. I only hope none of the dear boys will take after their father!

"And I should like to know what's the objection to Goldman? The only thing against him is his name; I must confess it, I don't like the name of Lazarus: it's low, and doesn't sound genteel—not at all respectable. But, after he's gone and done what's proper for the child, the boy could easily slip Lazarus into Laurence. I'm told the thing's done often. No, Caudle, don't say that—I'm not a mean woman; certainly not; quite the reverse. I've only a parent's love for my children; and I must say it—I wish everybody felt as I did.

"I suppose, if the truth was known, you'd like your tobacco-pipe friend, your pot-companion, Prettyman, to stand for the child? *You'd have no objection?* I thought not! Yes; I knew what it was coming to. He's a beggar, he is; and a person who stays out half the night; yes, he does; and it's no use your denying it—a beggar and a tippler, and that's the man you'd make godfather to your own flesh and blood! Upon my word, Caudle, it's enough to make a woman get up and dress herself to hear you talk.

"Well, I can hardly tell you, if you won't have Wagstaff, or Pugsby, or Sniggins, or Goldman, or somebody that's respectable, to do what's proper, the child shan't be christened at all. As for Prettyman, or any such raff—no, never! I'm sure there's a certain set of people that poverty's catching from, and that Prettyman's one of 'em. Now, Caudle, I won't have my dear child lost by any of your spittoon acquaintance, I can tell you.

"No; unless I can have *my* way, the child shan't be christened at all. What do you say? *It must have a name?* There's no 'must' at all in the case—none. No: it shall have no name; and then see what the world will say. I'll call it Number Six—yes, that will do as well as anything else, unless I've the godfather I like. Number Six Caudle! ha! ha! I think that must make you ashamed of yourself if anything can. Number Six Caudle—a much better name than Mr. Prettyman could give; yes, Number Six! What do you say? *Anything but Number Seven?* Oh, Caudle, if ever—"

"At this moment," writes Caudle, "little Number Six began to cry; and taking advantage of the happy accident, I somehow got to sleep."

LECTURE XVII.

CAUDLE IN THE COURSE OF THE DAY HAS VENTURED TO QUESTION THE ECONOMY OF "WASHING AT HOME."

"A PRETTY temper you come to bed in, Mr. Caudle, I can see! Oh, don't deny it—I think I ought to know by this time. But it's always the way; whenever I get up a few things, the house can hardly hold you! Nobody cries out more about clean linen than you do—and nobody leads a poor woman so miserable a life when she tries to make her husband comfortable. Yes, Mr. Caudle—comfortable! You needn't keep chewing the word, as if you couldn't swallow it. *Was there ever such a woman?* No, Caudle; I hope not: I should hope no other wife was ever put upon as I am! It's all very well for you. I can't have a little wash at home like anybody else, but you must go about the house swearing to yourself, and looking at your wife as if she was your bitterest enemy. But I suppose you'd rather we didn't wash at all. Yes; then you'd be happy! To be sure you would—you'd like to have all the children in their dirt, like potatoes: anything, so that it didn't disturb you. I wish you'd had a wife who'd never washed—*she'd* have suited you, she would. Yes: a fine lady who'd have let your children go that you might have scraped 'em. She'd have been much better cared for than I am. I only wish I could let all of you go without clean linen at all—yes, all of you. I wish I could! And if I wasn't a slave to my family, unlike anybody else, I should.

"No, Mr. Caudle; the house isn't tossed about in water as if it was Noah's Ark! And you ought to be ashamed of yourself to talk of Noah's Ark in that loose manner. I'm sure I don't know what I've done to be married to a man of such principles. No: and the whole house *doesn't* taste of soap-suds either; and if it did, any other man but yourself would be above naming it. I suppose I don't like washing day any more than yourself. What do you say? *Yes I do?* Ha! you're wrong there, Mr. Caudle. No; I don't like it because it makes everybody else uncomfortable. No; and I ought not to have been born a mermaid, that I might always have been in water. A mermaid, indeed! What next will you call me? But no man, Mr. Caudle, says such things to his wife as you. However, as I've said before, it can't last long, that's one comfort. What do you

say? *You're glad of it?* You're a brute, Mr. Caudle! No, you *didn't* mean washing: I know what you meant. A pretty speech to a woman who's been the wife to you I have! You'll repent it when it's too late: yes, I wouldn't have your feelings when I'm gone, Caudle; no, not for the bank of England.

"And when we only wash once a fortnight! Ha! I only wish you had some wives: they'd wash once a week! Besides, if once a fortnight's too much for you, why don't you give me money that we may have things to go a month? Is it *my* fault, if we're short? What do you say? *My 'once a fortnight' lasts three days?* No, it doesn't; never; well, very seldom, and that's the same thing. Can I help it, if the blacks will fly, and the things must be rinsed again? Don't say that: I'm *not* made happy by the blacks, and they *don't* prolong my enjoyment: and, more than that, you're an unfeeling man to say so. You're enough to make a woman wish herself in her grave—you are, Caudle.

"And a pretty example you set to your sons! Because we'd a little wash to-day, and there wasn't a hot dinner—and who thinks of getting anything hot for washerwomen?—because you hadn't everything as you always have it, you must swear at the cold mutton—and you don't know what that mutton cost a pound, I dare say—you must swear at a sweet, wholesome joint like a lord. What? *You didn't swear?* Yes; it's very well for you to say so; but I know when you're swearing; and you swear when you little think it; and I say you must go on swearing as you did, and seize your hat like a savage, and rush out of the house, and go and take your dinner at a tavern! A pretty wife people must think you have, when they find you dining at a public-house. A nice home they must think you have, Mr. Caudle! What! *You'll do so every time I wash?* Very well Mr. Caudle—very well. We'll soon see who's tired of that, first; for I'll wash a stocking a day if that's all, sooner than you should have everything as you like. Ha! that's so like you: you'd trample everybody under foot, if you could—you know you would, Caudle, so don't deny it.

"Now, if you begin to shout in that manner, I'll leave the bed. It's very hard that I can't say a single word to you, but you must almost raise the place. *You didn't shout?* I don't know what you call shouting, then! I'm sure the people must hear you in the next house. No—it won't do to call me soft names, now, Caudle: I'm not the fool that I was when I was first married—I know better now. You're to treat me in the manner you have, all day; and then at night, the only time and place when I can get a word in, you want to go to sleep. How can you be so mean, Caudle?

"What! *Why can't I put the washing out?* Now, you have asked that a thousand times, but it's no use, Caudle; so don't ask it again. I won't put it out. What do you say? *Mrs. Prettyman says it's quite as cheap?* Pray, what's Mrs. Prettyman to me? I should think, Mr. Caudle, that I know very well how to take care of my family, without Mrs. Prettyman's advice. Mrs. Prettyman, indeed! I only wish she'd come here, that I might tell her so! Mrs. Prettyman! But, perhaps she'd better come and take care of your house for you! Oh, yes! I've no doubt she'd do it much better than I do—*much.* No, Caudle! *I won't hold my tongue.* I think I ought to be mistress of my own washing by this time—and after the wife I've been to you, it's cruel of you to go on as you do.

"Don't tell me about putting the washing out. I say it isn't so cheap—I don't care whether you wash by the dozen or not—it isn't so cheap; I've reduced everything, and I save at least a shilling a week. What do you say? *A trumpery shilling?* Ha! I only hope to goodness you'll not come to want, talking of shillings in the way you do. Now, don't begin about your comfort: don't go on aggravating me, and asking me if your comfort's not worth a shilling a week? That's nothing at all to do with it—nothing: but that's your way—when I talk of one thing, you talk of another; that's so like you men, and you know it. Allow me to tell you, Mr. Caudle, that a shilling a week is two pound twelve a year, and take two pound twelve a year for, let us say, thirty years, and—well, you needn't groan, Mr. Caudle—I don't suppose it will be so long; oh, no! you'll have somebody else to look after your washing long before that—and if it wasn't for my dear children's sake I shouldn't care how soon. You know my mind—and so, good night, Mr. Caudle."

"Thankful for her silence," writes Caudle, "I was fast dropping to sleep; when, jogging my elbow, my wife observed—'Mind, there's the cold mutton to-morrow—nothing hot till that's gone. Remember, too, as it was a short wash to-day, we wash again on Wednesday.'"

LECTURE XVIII.

CAUDLE, WHILST WALKING WITH HIS WIFE, HAS BEEN BOWED TO BY A YOUNGER AND EVEN PRETTIER WOMAN THAN MRS. CAUDLE.

"If I'm not to leave the house without being insulted, Mr. Caudle, I had better stay in-doors all my life.

"What! Don't tell me to let you have *one* night's rest! I wonder at your impudence! It's mighty fine, I never can go out with you, and—goodness knows!—it's seldom enough, without having my feelings torn to pieces by people of all sorts. A set of bold minxes! *What am I raving about?* Oh, you know very well—very well, indeed, Mr. Caudle. A pretty person she must be to nod to a man walking with his own wife! Don't tell me that it's Miss Prettyman—what's Miss Prettyman to me? Oh! *You've met her once or twice at her brother's house?* Yes, I dare say you have—no doubt of it. I always thought there was something very tempting about that house—and now I know it all. Now, it's no use, Mr. Caudle, your beginning to talk loud, and twist and toss your arms about as if you were as innocent as a born babe—I'm not to be deceived by such tricks now. No; there was a time when I was a fool and believed anything; but—I thank my stars!—I've got over that.

"A bold minx! You suppose I didn't see her laugh, too, when she nodded to you! Oh yes, I knew what she thought me; a poor miserable creature, of course. I could see that. No—don't say so, Caudle. I *don't* always see more than anybody else—but I can't and won't be blind, however agreeable it might be to you; I must have the use of my senses. I'm sure, if a woman wants attention and respect from a man, she'd better be anything than his wife. I've always thought so; and to-day's decided it.

"No; I'm not ashamed of myself to talk so—certainly not. *A good, amiable young creature, indeed!* Yes; I dare say; very amiable, no doubt. Of course, you think her so. You suppose I didn't see what sort of a bonnet she had on? Oh, a very good creature! And you think I didn't see the smudges of court plaster about her face? *You didn't see 'em?* Very likely; but I did. Very amiable, to be sure! What do you say? *I made her blush at my ill-manners?* I should like to have seen her blush! 'Twould have been rather difficult, Mr. Caudle, for a blush to come through all that paint. No—I'm not a censorious woman, Mr. Caudle; quite the reverse. No; and you may

threaten to get up, if you like—I will speak. I know what colour is, and I say it *was* paint. I believe, Mr. Caudle, *I* once had a complexion; though, of course, you've quite forgotten that: I think I once had a colour, before your conduct destroyed it. Before I knew you, people used to call me the Lily and Rose; but—what are you laughing at? I see nothing to laugh at. But as I say, anybody before your own wife.

"And I can't walk out with you but you're bowed to by every woman you meet! *What do I mean by every woman, when it's only Miss Prettyman?* That's nothing at all to do with it. How do I know who bows to you when I'm not by? Everybody of course. And if they don't look at you, why you look at them. Oh! I'm sure you do. You do it even when I'm out with you, and of course you do it when I'm away. Now, don't tell me, Caudle—don't deny it. The fact is, it's become such a dreadful habit with you, that you don't know when you do it, and when you don't. But I do.

"Miss Prettyman, indeed! What do you say? *You won't lie still and hear me scandalise that excellent young woman?* Oh, of course, you'll take her part! Though, to be sure, she may not be so much to blame after all. For how is she to know you're married? You're never seen out of doors with your own wife—never. Wherever you go, you go alone. Of course people think you're a bachelor. What do you say? *You well know you're not?* That's nothing to do with it—I only ask what must people think, when I'm never seen with you? Other women go out with their husbands: but as I've often said, I'm not like any other woman. What are you sneering at, Mr. Caudle? *How do I know you're sneering?* Don't tell me: I know well enough, by the movement of the pillow.

"No; you never take me out—and you know it. No; and it's not my own fault. How can you lie there and say that? Oh, all a poor excuse! That's what you always say. You're tired of asking me, indeed, because I always start some objection? Of course I can't go out a figure. And when you ask me to go, you know very well that my bonnet isn't as it should be—or that my gown hasn't come home—or that I can't leave the children,—or that something keeps me in-doors. You know all this, well enough, before you ask me. And that's your art. And when I *do* go out with you, I'm sure to suffer for it. Yes; you needn't repeat my words. *Suffer for it.* But you suppose I have no feelings: oh no, nobody has feelings but yourself. Yes; I'd forgot: Miss Prettyman, perhaps—yes, she may have feelings, of course.

"And as I've said, I dare say a pretty dupe people think me. To be sure; a poor forlorn creature I must look in everybody's

eyes. But I knew you couldn't be at Mr. Prettyman's house night after night till eleven o'clock—and a great deal you thought of me sitting up for you—I knew you couldn't be there without some cause. And now I've found it out! Oh, I don't mind your swearing, Mr. Caudle! It's I, if I wasn't a woman, who ought to swear. But it's like you men. Lords of the creation, as you call yourselves! Lords, indeed! And pretty slaves you make of the poor creatures who're tied to you. But I'll be separated, Caudle; I will; and then I'll take care and let all the world know how you've used me. What do you say? *I may say my worst?* Ha! don't you tempt any woman in that way—don't, Caudle; for I wouldn't answer for what I said.

"Miss Prettyman, indeed, and—oh yes! now I see! Now the whole light breaks in upon me! Now, I know why you wished me to ask her with Mr. and Mrs. Prettyman to tea! And I, like a poor blind fool, was nearly doing it. But now, as I say, my eyes are open! And you'd have brought her under my own roof—now it's no use you're bouncing about in that fashion—you'd have brought her into the very house, where——"

"Here," says Caudle, "I could endure it no longer. So I jumped out of bed, and went and slept somehow with the children."

LECTURE XIX.

MRS. CAUDLE THINKS "IT WOULD LOOK WELL TO KEEP THEIR WEDDING-DAY."

CAUDLE, love, do you know what next Sunday is? *No! you don't?* Well, was there ever such a strange man! Can't you guess, darling? Next Sunday, dear? Think, love, a minute—just think. *What! and you don't know now?* Ha! if I hadn't a better memory than you, I don't know how we should ever get on. Well, then, pet,—shall I tell you what next Sunday is? Why, then, it's our wedding-day——What are you groaning at, Mr. Caudle? I don't see anything to groan at. If anybody should groan, I'm sure it isn't you. No: I rather think it's I who ought to groan!

"Oh, dear! That's fourteen years ago. You were a very different man, then, Mr. Caudle. What do you say?—*And I was a very different woman?* Not at all—just the same. Oh, you needn't roll your head about on the pillow in that way: I say, just the same. Well, then, if I'm altered, whose fault is it? Not

mine, I'm sure—certainly not. Don't tell me that I couldn't talk at all then—I could talk just as well then as I can now; only then I hadn't the same cause. It's you who've made me talk. What do you say? *You're very sorry for it?* Caudle, you do nothing but insult me.

"Ha! you were a good-tempered, nice creature fourteen years ago, and would have done anything for me. Yes, yes, if a woman would be always cared for, she should never marry. There's quite an end of the charm when she goes to church! We're all angels while you're courting us; but once married, how soon you pull our wings off! No, Mr. Caudle, I'm not talking nonsense; but the truth is, you like to hear nobody talk but yourself. Nobody ever tells me that I talk nonsense but you. Now, it's no use your turning and turning about in that way, it's not a bit of —what do you say? *You'll get up?* No you won't, Mr. Caudle; you'll not serve me that trick again; for I've locked the door, and hid the key. There's no getting hold of you all the daytime,—but here you can't leave me. You needn't groan again, Mr. Caudle.

"Now, Caudle, dear, do let us talk comfortably. After all, love, there's a good many folks who, I dare say, don't get on half so well as we've done. We've both our little tempers, perhaps; but you *are* aggravating; you must own that, Caudle. Well, never mind; we won't talk of it; I won't scold you now. We'll talk of next Sunday, love. We never have kept our wedding-day, and I think it would be a nice day to have our friends. What do you say? *They'd think it hypocrisy?* No hypocrisy at all. I'm sure I try to be comfortable; and if ever man was happy, *you* ought to be. No, Caudle, no; it isn't nonsense to keep wedding-days; it isn't a deception on the world; and if it is, how many people do it? I'm sure, it's only a proper compliment that a man owes to his wife. Look at the Winkles—don't they give a dinner every year? Well, I know, and if they do fight a little in the course of the twelvemonth, that's nothing to do with it. They keep their wedding-day, and their acquaintance have nothing to do with anything else.

"As I say, Caudle, it's only a proper compliment that a man owes to his wife to keep his wedding-day. It's as much as to say to the whole world—'There! if I had to marry again, my blessed wife's the only woman I'd choose!' Well! I see nothing to groan at, Mr. Caudle—no, nor to sigh at either; but I know what you mean: I'm sure, what would have become of you, if you hadn't married as you have done—why, you'd have been a lost creature! I know it; I know your habits, Caudle; and—I don't like to say it—but you'd have been little better than a ragamuffin.

Nice scrapes you'd have got into I know, if you hadn't had me for a wife. The trouble I've had to keep you respectable—and what's my thanks? Ha! I only wish you'd had some women!

"But we won't quarrel, Caudle. No; you don't mean anything, I know. We'll have this little dinner, eh? Just a few friends? Now don't say you don't care—that isn't the way to speak to a wife; and especially the wife I've been to you, Caudle. Well, you agree to the dinner, eh? Now, don't grunt, Mr. Caudle, but speak out. You'll keep your wedding day? What? *If I'll let you go to sleep?* Ha, that's unmanly, Caudle; can't you say, 'Yes' without anything else? I say—can't you say 'Yes?'—There, bless you! I knew you would.

"And now, Caudle, what shall we have for dinner? No—we won't talk of it to-morrow; we'll talk of it now, and then it will be off my mind. I should like something particular—something out of the way—just to show that we thought the day something. I should like—Mr. Caudle, you're not asleep? *What do I want?* Why you know I want to settle about the dinner. *Have what I like?* No: as it's your fancy to keep the day, it's only right that I should try to please you. We never had one, Caudle; so what do you think of a haunch of venison? What do you say? *Mutton will do?* Ha! that shows what you think of your wife: I dare say if it was with any of your club friends—any of your pot-house companions—you'd have no objection to venison. I say if—what do you mutter? *Let it be venison?* Very well. And now about the fish? What do you think of a nice turbot? No, Mr. Caudle, brill won't do—it shall be turbot, or there shan't be any fish at all. Oh, what a mean man you are, Caudle! Shall it be turbot? *It shall?* Very well. And now about the soup—now Caudle, don't swear at the soup in that manner; you know there must be soup. Well, once in a way, and just to show our friends how happy we've been, we'll have some real turtle. *No, you won't, you'll have nothing but mock?* Then, Mr. Caudle, you may sit at the table by yourself. Mock-turtle on a wedding day! Was there ever such an insult? What do you say? *Let it be real then, for once?* Ha, Caudle! as I say, you were a very different person fourteen years ago.

"And Caudle, you'll look after the venison? There's a place I know, somewhere in the City, where you get it beautiful! You'll look to it? *You will?* Very well.

"And now who shall we invite? *Who I like?* Now, you know, Caudle, that's nonsense; because I only like whom you like. I suppose the Prettymans must come? But understand, Caudle, I don't have Miss Prettyman: I'm not going to have my

peace of mind destroyed under my own roof: if she comes, I don't appear at the table. What do you say? *Very well?* Very well be it, then.

"And now, Caudle, you'll not forget the venison? In the City, my dear? You'll not forget the venison? A haunch, you know: a nice haunch. And you'll not forget the venison?——"

"Three times did I fall off to sleep," says Caudle, "and three times did my wife nudge me with her elbow, exclaiming—'You'll not forget the venison?' At last I got into a sound slumber, and dreamt I was a pot of currant-jelly."

LECTURE XX.

"BROTHER" CAUDLE HAS BEEN TO A MASONIC CHARITABLE DINNER. MRS. CAUDLE HAS HIDDEN THE "BROTHER'S" CHEQUE-BOOK.

"ALL I say is this: I only wish I'd been born a man. What do you say? *You wish I had?* Mr. Caudle, I'll not lie quiet in my own bed to be insulted. Oh, yes, you *did* mean to insult me. I know what you mean. You mean, if I *had* been born a man, you'd never have married me. That's a pretty sentiment, I think? and after the wife I've been to you. And now I suppose you'll be going to public dinners every day! it's no use your telling me you've only been to one before; that's nothing to do with it—nothing at all. Of course you'll be out every night now. I knew what it would come to when you were made a mason: when you were once made a 'brother,' as you call yourself, I knew where the husband and father would be;—I'm sure, Caudle, and though I'm your own wife, I grieve to say it—I'm sure you haven't so much heart, that you have any to spare for people out of doors. Indeed, I should like to see the man who has! No, no, Caudle; I'm by no means a selfish woman—quite the contrary; I love my fellow-creatures as a wife and mother of a family, who has only to look to her own husband and children, ought to love 'em.

"A 'brother,' indeed! What would you say, if I was to go and be made a 'sister'? Why, I know very well—the house wouldn't hold you.

"*Where's your watch?* How should I know where your watch is? You ought to know. But to be sure, people who go to public dinners never know where anything is when they come

home. You 've lost it, no doubt; and 'twill serve you quite right if you have. If it should be gone—and nothing more likely—I wonder if any of your 'brothers' will give you another? Catch 'em doing it.

"*You must find your watch? And you'll get up for it?* Nonsense—don't be foolish—lie still. Your watch is on the mantelpiece. Ha! isn't it a good thing for you, you've somebody to take care of it?

"What do you say? *I'm a dear creature?* Very dear, indeed, you think me, I dare say. But the fact is, you don't know what you're talking about to-night. I'm a fool to open my lips to you—but I can't help it.

"*Where's your watch?* Haven't I told you—on the mantelpiece? *All right, indeed?* Pretty conduct you men call all right. There now, hold your tongue, Mr. Caudle, and go to sleep: I'm sure 'tis the best thing you can do to-night. You'll be able to listen to reason to-morrow morning; now, it's thrown away upon you.

"*Where's your cheque-book?* Never mind your cheque-book. I took care of that. *What business had I to take it out of your pocket?* Every business. No, no. If you choose to go to public dinners, why—as I'm only your wife—I can't help it. But I know what fools men are made of there; and if I know it, you never take your cheque-book again with you. What! Didn't I see your name down last year for ten pounds? 'Job Caudle, Esq., 10*l.*' It looked very well in the newspapers, of course: and you thought yourself a somebody, when they knocked the tavern tables; but I only wish I'd been there—yes, I only wish I'd been in the gallery. If I wouldn't have told a piece of my mind, I'm not alive. Ten pounds, indeed! and the world thinks you a very fine person for it. I only wish I could bring the world here, and show 'em what's wanted at home. I think the world would alter their mind then; yes—a little.

"What do you say? *A wife has no right to pick her husband's pocket?* A pretty husband you are, to talk in that way. Never mind: you can't prosecute her for it—or I've no doubt you would; none at all. Some men would do anything. What? *You've a bit of a head-ache?* I hope you have—and a good bit, too. You've been to the right place for it. No—I won't hold my tongue. It's all very well for you men to go to taverns—and talk—and toast—and hurra—and—I wonder you're not all ashamed of yourselves to drink the Queen's health with all the honours, I believe, you call it—yes, pretty honours, you pay to the sex—I say, I wonder you're not ashamed to drink that blessed creature's health, when you've only to think how you

use your own wives at home. But the hypocrites that the men are—oh!

"*Where's your watch?* Haven't I told you? It's under your pillow—there, you needn't be feeling for it. I tell you it's under your pillow. *It's all right?* Yes; a great deal you know of what's right just now. Ha! was there ever any poor soul used as I am! *I'm a dear creature?* Pah! Mr. Caudle! I've only to say, I'm tired of your conduct—quite tired, and don't care how soon there's an end of it.

"*Why did I take your cheque-book?* I've told you—to save you from ruin, Mr. Caudle. *You're not going to be ruined?* Ha! you don't know anything when you're out! I know what they do at those public dinners — charities, they call 'em; pretty charities! True Charity, I believe, always dines at home. I know what they do: the whole system's a trick. No: *I'm not a stony-hearted creature:* and you ought to be ashamed to say so of your wife and the mother of your children,—but, you'll not make me cry to-night, I can tell you—I was going to say that—oh! you're such an aggravating man I don't know what I was going to say!

"*Thank Heaven?* What for? I don't see that there's anything to thank Heaven about! I was going to say, I know the trick of public dinners. They get a lord, or a duke, if they can catch him—anything to make people say they've dined with nobility, that's it—yes, they get one of these people, with a star perhaps in his coat, to take the chair—and to talk all sorts of sugar-plum things about charity—and to make foolish men, with wine in 'em, feel that they've no end of money; and then—shutting their eyes to their wives and families at home—all the while that their own faces are red and flushed like poppies, and they think to-morrow will never come—then they get 'em to put their hand to paper. Then they make 'em pull out their cheques. But I took your book, Mr. Caudle—you couldn't do it a second time. What are you laughing at? *Nothing?* It's no matter: I shall see it in the paper to-morrow; for if you gave anything, you were too proud to hide it. I know *your* charity.

"*Where's your watch?* Haven't I told you fifty times where it is? In the pocket—over your head—of course. Can't you hear it tick? No: you can hear nothing to-night.

"And now, Mr. Caudle, I should like to know whose hat it is you've brought home? You went out with a beaver worth three-and-twenty shillings—the second time you've worn it—and you bring home a thing that no Jew in his senses would give me fivepence for. I couldn't even get a pot of primroses—and you know I always turn your old hats into roots—not a pot of prim-

roses for it. I'm certain of it now,—I've often thought it—but now I'm sure that some people dine out only to change their hats.

"*Where's your watch?* Caudle, you're bringing me to an early grave!"

We hope that Caudle was penitent for his conduct; indeed, there is, we think, evidence that he was so: for to this lecture he has appended no comment. The man had not the face to do it.

LECTURE XXI.

MR. CAUDLE HAS NOT ACTED "LIKE A HUSBAND" AT THE WEDDING DINNER.

"Ah me! It's no use wishing—none at all: but I do wish that yesterday fourteen years could come back again. Little did I think, Mr. Caudle, when you brought me home from church, your lawful wedded wife—little, I say, did I think that I should keep my wedding-dinner in the manner I have done to-day. Fourteen years ago! Yes, I see you now in your blue coat with bright buttons, and your white watered-satin waistcoat, and a moss rose-bud in your button-hole, which you said was like me. What? *You never talked such nonsense?* Ha! Mr. Caudle, you don't know what you talked that day—but I do. Yes; and you then sat at the table as if your face, as I may say, was buttered with happiness, and—What? No. Mr. Caudle, don't say that; *I* have not wiped the butter off—not I. If you above all men are not happy, you ought to be, gracious knows!

"Yes, I *will* talk of fourteen years ago. Ha! you sat beside me then, and picked out all sorts of nice things for me. You'd have given me pearls and diamonds to eat if I could have swallowed 'em. Yes, I say, you sat beside me, and—What do you talk about? *You couldn't sit beside me to-day?* That's nothing at all to do with it. But it's so like you. I can't speak but you fly off to something else. Ha! and when the health of the young couple was drunk, what a speech you made then! It was delicious! How you made everybody cry, as if their hearts were breaking; and I recollect it as if it was yesterday, how the tears ran down dear father's nose, and how dear mother nearly went into a fit! Dear souls! They little thought, with all your fine talk, how you'd use me! *How have you used me?* Oh, Mr. Caudle, how can you ask that question? It's well for you I can't see you blush. *How* have you used me!

"Well, that the same tongue could make a speech like that, and then talk as it did to-day! *How did you talk?* Why, shamefully! What did you say about your wedded happiness? Why, nothing. What did you say about your wife? Worse than nothing: just as if she were a bargain you were sorry for, but were obliged to make the best of. What do you say? *And bad's the best?* If you say that again, Caudle, I'll rise from my bed. *You didn't say it?* What, then, did you say? Something very like it, I know. Yes, a pretty speech of thanks for a husband! And everybody could see that you didn't care a pin for me; and that's why you had 'em here: that's why you invited 'em, to insult me to their faces. What? *I made you invite 'em?* Oh, Caudle, what an aggravating man you are!

"I suppose you'll say next I made you invite Miss Prettyman? Oh yes; don't tell me that her brother brought her without your knowing it. What? *Didn't I hear him say so?* Of course I did; but do you suppose I'm quite a fool? Do you think I don't know that that was all settled between you? And she must be a nice person to come unasked to a woman's house? But I know why she came. Oh yes; she came to look about her. *What do I mean?* Oh, the meaning's plain enough. She came to see how she should like the rooms—how she should like my seat at the fire-place; how she—and if it isn't enough to break a mother's heart to be treated so!—how she should like my dear children.

"Now, it's no use your bouncing about at—but of course that's it; I can't mention Miss Prettyman, but you fling about as if you were in a fit. Of course that shows there's something in it. Otherwise, why should you disturb yourself? Do you think I didn't see her looking at the cyphers on the spoons as if she already saw mine scratched out and her's there? No, I shan't drive you mad, Mr. Caudle; and if I do it's your own fault. No other man would treat the wife of his bosom in—What do you say? *You might as well have married a hedgehog?* Well, now it's come to something! But it's always the case! Whenever you've seen that Miss Prettyman, I'm sure to be abused. A hedgehog! A pretty thing for a woman to be called by her husband! Now you don't think I'll lie quietly in bed, and be called a hedgehog—do you, Mr. Caudle?

"Well, I only hope Miss Prettyman had a good dinner, that's all. *I* had none! You know I had none—how was I to get any? You know that the only part of the turkey I care for is the merrythought. And that, of course, went to Miss Prettyman. Oh, I saw you laugh when you put it on her plate! And you don't suppose, after such an insult as that, I'd taste another thing upon the table? No, I should hope I have more spirit than that.

Yes; and you took wine with her four times. What do you say? *Only twice?* Oh, you were so lost—fascinated, Mr. Caudle; yes, fascinated—that you didn't know what you did. However, I do think while I'm alive I might be treated with respect at my own table. I say, while I'm alive; for I know I shan't last long, and then Miss Prettyman may come and take it all. I'm wasting daily, and no wonder. I never say anything about it, but every week my gowns are taken in.

"I've lived to learn something, to be sure! Miss Prettyman turned up her nose at my custards. It isn't sufficient that you're always finding fault yourself, but you must bring women home to sneer at me at my own table. What do you say? *She didn't turn up her nose?* I know she did; not but what it's needless—Providence has turned it up quite enough for her already. And she must give herself airs over my custards! Oh, I saw her mincing with the spoon as if she was chewing sand. What do you say? *She praised my plum-pudding?* Who asked her to praise it? Like her impudence, I think!

"Yes, a pretty day I've passed. I shall not forget this wedding-day, I think! And as I say, a pretty speech you made in the way of thanks. No, Caudle, if I was to live a hundred years—you needn't groan, Mr. Caudle, I shall not trouble you half that time—if I was to live a hundred years, I should never forget it. Never! You didn't even so much as bring one of your children into your speech. And—dear creatures!—what have *they* done to offend you? No; I shall not drive you mad. It's you, Mr. Caudle, who'll drive me mad. Everybody says so.

"And you suppose I didn't see how it was managed, that you and *that* Miss Prettyman were always partners at whist? *How was it managed?* Why, plain enough. Of course you packed the cards, and could cut what you liked. You'd settled that, between you. Yes; and when she took a trick, instead of leading off a trump—*she* play whist, indeed!—what did you say to her, when she found it was wrong? Oh—It was impossible that *her* heart should mistake! And this, Mr. Caudle, before people—with your own wife in the room!

"And Miss Prettyman—I won't hold my tongue. I *will* talk of Miss Prettyman: who's she, indeed, that I shouldn't talk of her? I suppose she thinks she sings? What do you say? *She sings like a mermaid?* Yes, very—very like a mermaid: for she never sings but she exposes herself. She might, I think, have chosen another song. '*I love somebody*,' indeed; as if I didn't know who was meant by that 'somebody;' and all the room knew it, of course; and that was what it was done for, nothing else.

"However, Mr. Caudle, as my mind's made up, I shall say no more about the matter to-night, but try to go to sleep."

"And to my astonishment and gratitude," writes Caudle, "she kept her word."

LECTURE XXII.

CAUDLE COMES HOME IN THE EVENING, AS MRS. CAUDLE HAS "JUST STEPPED OUT, SHOPPING." ON HER RETURN, AT TEN, CAUDLE REMONSTRATES.

"You ought to have had a slave—yes, a black slave, and not a wife. I'm sure, I'd better been born a negro at once—much better. *What's the matter, now?* Well, I like that. Upon my life, Mr. Caudle, that's very cool. I can't leave the house just to buy a yard of riband, but you storm enough to carry the roof off. *You din't storm?—you only spoke?* Spoke, indeed! No, sir: I've not such superfine feelings; and I don't cry out before I'm hurt. But you ought to have married a woman of stone, for you feel for nobody: that is, for nobody in your own house. I only wish you'd show some of your humanity at home, if ever so little—that's all.

"What do you say? *Where's my feelings, to go a shopping at night?* When would you have me go? In the broiling sun, making my face like a gipsy's? I don't see anything to laugh at, Mr. Caudle; but you think of anybody's face before your wife's. Oh, that's plain enough; and all the world can see it. I dare say, now, if it was Miss Prettyman's face—now, now, Mr. Caudle! What are you throwing yourself about for? I suppose Miss Prettyman isn't so wonderful a person that she isn't to be named? I suppose she's flesh and blood. What? *You don't know?* Ha! I don't know that.

"What, Mr. Caudle? *You'll have a separate room?—you'll not be tormented in this manner?* No, you won't, sir—not while I'm alive. A separate room! And you call yourself a religious man, Mr. Caudle. I'd advise you to take down the Prayer Book, and read over the Marriage Service. A separate room, indeed! Caudle, you're getting quite a heathen. A separate room! Well, the servants would talk then! But no: no man—not the best that ever trod, Caudle—should ever make me look so contemptible.

"I *shan't* go to sleep; and you ought to know me better than

to ask me to hold my tongue. Because you come home when I've just stepped out to do a little shopping, you're worse than a fury. I should like to know how many hours I sit up for you? What do you say? *Nobody wants me to sit up?* Ha! that's like the gratitude of men—just like 'em! But a poor woman can't leave the house, that—what? *Why can't I go at reasonable hours?* Reasonable! What do you call eight o'clock? If I went out at eleven and twelve, as you come home, then you might talk; but seven or eight o'clock—why it's the cool of the evening; the nicest time to enjoy a walk; and, as I say, do a little bit of shopping. Oh yes, Mr. Caudle, I do think of the people that are kept in the shops just as much as you; but that's nothing at all to do with it. I know what you'd have. You'd have all those young men let away early from the counter to improve what you please to call their minds. Pretty notions you pick up among a set of free-thinkers, and I don't know what! When I was a girl, people never talked of minds—intellect, I believe you call it. Nonsense! a new-fangled thing, just come up; and the sooner it goes out, the better.

"Don't tell me! What are shops for, if they're not to be open late and early too? And what are shopmen, if they're not always to attend upon their customers? People pay for what they have, I suppose; and arn't to be told when they shall come and lay their money out, and when they shan't? Thank goodness! if one shop shuts, another keeps open; and I always think it a duty I owe to myself to go to the shop that's open last: it's the only way to punish the shopkeepers that are idle, and give themselves airs about early hours.

"Besides, there's some things I like to buy best at candlelight. Oh, don't talk to me about humanity! Humanity, indeed, for a pack of tall, strapping young fellows—some of 'em big enough to be shown for giants! And what have they to do? Why nothing, but to stand behind a counter, and talk civility. Yes, I know your notions; you say that everybody works too much: I know that. You'd have all the world do nothing half its time but twiddle its thumbs, or walk in the parks, or go to picture-galleries, and museums, and such nonsense. Very fine, indeed; but, thank goodness! the world isn't come to that pass yet.

"What do you say I am, Mr. Caudle? *A foolish woman, that can't look beyond my own fireside?* Oh yes, I can; quite as far as you, and a great deal farther. But I can't go out shopping a little with my dear friend, Mrs. Wittles—what do you laugh at? Oh, don't they? Don't women know what friendship is? Upon my life you've a nice opinion of us! Oh, yes, we *can*—we can look outside of our own fenders, Mr. Caudle. And if we can't, it's all

the better for our families. A blessed thing it would be for their wives and children if men couldn't either. You wouldn't have lent that five pounds—and I dare say a good many other five pounds that I know nothing of—if you—a lord of the creation! —had half the sense women have. You seldom catch us, I believe, lending five pounds. I should think not.

"No: we won't talk of it to-morrow morning. You're not going to wound my feelings when I come home, and think I'm to say nothing about it. You have called me an inhuman person; you have said I have no thought, no feeling for the health and comfort of my fellow creatures; I don't know what you haven't called me; and only for buying a—but I shan't tell you what; no, I won't satisfy you there—but you've abused me in this manner, and only for shopping up to ten o'clock. You've a great deal of fine compassion, you have! I'm sure the young man that served me could have knocked down an ox; yes, strong enough to lift a house: but you can pity him—oh yes, you can be all kindness for him, and for the world, as you call it. Oh, Caudle, what a hypocrite you are! I only wish the world knew how you treated your poor wife!

"What do you say? *For the love of mercy let you sleep?* Mercy, indeed! I wish you could show a little of it to other people. O yes, I *do* know what mercy means; but that's no reason I should go shopping a bit earlier than I do—and I won't—No; you've preached this over to me again and again; you've made me go to meetings to hear all about it: but that's no reason women shouldn't shop just as late as they choose. It's all very fine, as I say, for you men to talk to us at meetings, where, of course, we smile and all that—and sometimes shake our white pocket-handkerchiefs—and where you say we have the power of early hours in our own hands. To be sure we have; and we mean to keep it. That is, I do. You'll never catch me shopping till the very last thing; and—as a matter of principle—I'll always go to the shop that keeps open latest. It does the young men good to keep 'em close to business. Improve their minds, indeed! Let 'em out at seven, and they'd improve nothing but their billiards. Besides, if they want to improve themselves, can't they get up, this fine weather, at three? Where there's a will, there's a way, Mr. Caudle."

"I thought," writes Caudle, "that she had gone to sleep. In this hope, I was dozing off when she jogged me, and thus declared herself:—'Caudle, you want nightcaps; but see if I budge to buy 'em till nine at night!'"

LECTURE XXIII.

MRS. CAUDLE "WISHES TO KNOW IF THEY'RE GOING TO THE SEA-SIDE, OR NOT, THIS SUMMER—THAT'S ALL."

"HOT? Yes, it *is* hot. I'm sure one might as well be in an oven as in town this weather. You seem to forget it's July, Mr. Caudle. I've been waiting quietly—have never spoken; yet, not a word have you said of the sea-side yet. Not that I care for it myself—oh, no; my health isn't of the slightest consequence. And, indeed, I was going to say—but I won't—that the sooner, perhaps, I'm out of this world, the better. Oh, yes: I dare say you think so—of course you do, else you wouldn't lie there saying nothing. You're enough to aggravate a saint, Caudle; but you shan't vex me. No; I've made up my mind, and never intend to let you vex me again. Why should I worry myself.

"But all I want to ask you is this: do you intend to go to the sea-side this summer? *Yes? you'll go to Gravesend?* Then you'll go alone, that's all I know. Gravesend! You might as well empty a salt-cellar in the New River, and call that the sea-side. What? *It's handy for business?* There you are again! I can never speak of taking a little enjoyment, but you fling business in my teeth. I'm sure you never let business stand in the way of your own pleasure, Mr. Caudle—not you. It would be all the better for your family if you did.

"You know that Matilda wants sea-bathing; you know it, or ought to know it, by the looks of the child; and yet—I know you, Caudle—you'd have let the summer pass over, and never said a word about the matter. What do you say? *Margate's so expensive?* Not at all. I'm sure it will be cheaper for us in the end; for if we don't go, we shall all be ill—every one of us—in the winter. Not that my health is of any consequence: I know that well enough. It never was yet. You know Margate's the only place I can eat a breakfast at, and yet you talk of Gravesend! But what's my eating to you? You wouldn't care if I never eat at all. You never watch my appetite like any other husband, otherwise you'd have seen what it's come to.

"What do you say? *How much will it cost?* There you are, Mr. Caudle, with your meanness again. When you want to go yourself to Blackwall or to Greenwich, you never ask, how much will it cost? What? *You never go to Blackwall?* Ha! I don't know that; and if you don't, that's nothing at all to do with it.

Yes, you can give a guinea a plate for whitebait for yourself. No, sir; I'm not a foolish woman: and I know very well what I'm talking about—nobody better. A guinea for whitebait for yourself, when you grudge a pint of shrimps for your poor family. Eh? *You don't grudge 'em anything?* Yes, it's very well for you to lie there and say so. *What will it cost?* It's no matter what it will cost, for we won't go at all now. No; we'll stay at home. We shall all be ill in the winter—every one of us, all but you; and nothing ever makes you ill. I've no doubt we shall all be laid up, and there'll be a doctor's bill as long as a railroad; but never mind that. It's better—much better—to pay for nasty physic than for fresh air and wholesome salt water. Don't call me 'woman,' and ask 'what it will cost.' I tell you, if you were to lay the money down before me on that quilt, I wouldn't go now —certainly not. It's better we should all be sick; yes, then you'll be pleased.

"That's right, Mr. Caudle; go to sleep. It's like your unfeeling self! I'm talking of our all being laid up; and you, like any stone, turn round and begin to go to sleep. Well, I think that's a pretty insult! *How can you sleep with such a splinter in your flesh?* I suppose you mean to call me the splinter?—and after the wife I've been to you! But no, Mr. Caudle, you may call me what you please; you'll not make me cry now. No, no: I don't throw away my tears upon any such person now. What? *Don't?* Ha! that's your ingratitude! But none of you men deserve that any woman should love you. My poor heart!

"Everybody else can go out of town except us. Ha! if I'd only married Simmons—What! *Why didn't I?* Yes, that's all the thanks I get. *Who's Simmons?* Oh, you know very well who Simmons is. He'd have treated me a little better, I think. He *was* a gentleman. *You can't tell?* May be not; but I can. With such weather as this, to stay melting in London; and when the painters are coming in! *You won't have the painters in?* But you must; and if they once come in, I'm determined that none of us shall stir then. Painting in July, with a family in the house! We shall all be poisoned, of course; but what do you care for that?

"*Why can't I tell you what it will cost?* How can I or any woman tell exactly what it will cost? Of course lodgings—and at Margate, too—are a little dearer than living at your own house. *Pooh! You know that?* Well, if you did, Mr. Caudle, I suppose there's no treason in naming it. Still, if you take 'em for two months, they're cheaper than for one. No, Mr. Caudle, I shall not be quite tired of it in one month. No: and it isn't true that I no sooner get out than I want to get home again. To

be sure, I was tired of Margate three years ago, when you used to leave me to walk about the beach by myself, to be stared at through all sorts of telescopes. But you don't do that again, Mr. Caudle, I can tell you.

"*What will I do at Margate?* Why isn't there bathing, and picking up shells; and arn't there the packets, with the donkeys; and the last new novel—whatever it is, to read—for the only place where I really relish a book is at the sea-side. No, it isn't that I like salt with my reading, Mr. Caudle! I suppose you call that a joke? You might keep your jokes for the day-time, I think. But as I was saying—only you always will interrupt me—the ocean always seems to me to open the mind. I see nothing to laugh at; but you always laugh when I say anything. Sometimes at the sea-side—specially when the tide's down—I feel so happy: quite as if I could cry.

"When shall I get the things ready? For next Sunday? *What will it cost?* Oh, there—don't talk of it. No: we won't go. I shall send for the painters, to-morrow. What? *I can go and take the children, and you'll stay?* No, sir: you go with me, or I don't stir. I'm not going to be turned loose like a hen with her chickens, and nobody to protect me. So we'll go on Monday? Eh?

"*What will it cost?* What a man you are! Why, Caudle, I've been reckoning that, with buff slippers and all, we can't well do it under seventy pounds. No: I won't take away the slippers, and say fifty: it's seventy pounds and no less. Of course, what's over will be so much saved. Caudle, what a man you are! Well, shall we go on Monday? What do you say—*You'll see?* There's a dear. Then, Monday."

"Anything for a chance of peace," writes Caudle. "I consented to the trip, for I thought I might sleep better in a change of bed."

LECTURE XXIV.

MRS. CAUDLE DWELLS ON CAUDLE'S "CRUEL NEGLECT" OF HER ON BOARD THE "RED ROVER." MRS. CAUDLE SO "ILL WITH THE SEA," THAT THEY PUT UP AT THE DOLPHIN, HERNE BAY.

"CAUDLE, have you looked under the bed? *What for?* Bless the man! Why, for thieves to be sure. Do you suppose I'd sleep in a strange bed, without? Don't tell me it's nonsense! I shouldn't sleep a wink all night. Not that you'd care for that: not that you'd—hush! I'm sure I hear somebody. No; it's not a bit like a mouse. Yes; that's like you—laugh. It would be no laughing matter if—I'm sure there *is* somebody!—I'm sure there is!

"——— Yes, Mr. Caudle; now I *am* satisfied. Any other man would have got up and looked himself; especially after my sufferings on board that nasty ship. But catch you stirring! Oh, no! You'd let me lie here and be robbed and killed, for what you'd care. Why you're not going to sleep! What do you say! *It's the strange air—and you're always sleepy in a strange air?* That shows the feelings you have, after what I've gone through. And yawning, too, in that brutal manner! Caudle, you've no more heart than that wooden figure in a white petticoat at the front of the ship.

"No; I *couldn't* leave my temper at home. I dare say! Because for once in your life you've brought me out—yes, I say once, or two or three times, it isn't more; because, as I say, you once bring me out, I'm to be a slave and say nothing. Pleasure, indeed! A great deal of pleasure I'm to have, if I'm to hold my tongue. A nice way that of pleasing a woman.

"Dear me! if the bed doesn't spin round and dance about! I've got all that filthy ship in my head! No: I shan't be well in the morning. But nothing ever ails anybody but yourself. You needn't groan in that way, Mr. Caudle, disturbing the people, perhaps, in the next room. It's a mercy I'm alive, I'm sure. If once I wouldn't have given all the world for anybody to have thrown me overboard! What are you smacking your lips at, Mr. Caudle? But I know what you mean—of course, you'd never have stirred to stop 'em: not you. And then you might have known that the wind would have blown to-day; but that's why you came.

"Whatever I should have done if it hadn't been for that good soul—that blessed Captain Large! I'm sure all the women who go to Margate ought to pray for him; so attentive in sea-sickness, and so much of a gentleman! How I should have got down stairs without him when I first began to turn, I don't know. Don't tell me I never complained to you—you might have seen I was ill. And when everybody was looking like a bad wax-candle, you could walk about, and make what you call your jokes upon the little buoy that was never sick at the Nore, and such unfeeling trash.

"Yes, Caudle; we've now been married many years, but if we were to live together for a thousand years to come—what are you clasping your hands at?—a thousand years to come I say, I shall never forget your conduct this day. You could go to the other end of the ship and smoke a cigar, when you knew I should be ill—oh, you knew it; for I always am. The brutal way, too, in which you took that cold brandy-and-water—you thought I didn't see you; but ill as I was, hardly able to hold my head up, I was watching you all the time. Three glasses of cold brandy-and-water; and you sipped 'em, and drank the health of people you didn't care a pin about; whilst the health of your own lawful wife was nothing. Three glasses of brandy-and-water, and *I* left —as I may say—alone! You didn't hear 'em, but everybody was crying shame of you.

"What do you say? *A good deal my own fault? I took too much dinner?* Well, you are a man! If I took more than the breast and leg of that young goose—a thing, I may say, just out of the shell—with the slightest bit of stuffing, I'm a wicked woman. What do you say? *Lobster salad?* La!—how can you speak of it? A month old baby would have eaten more. What? *Gooseberry pie?* Well, if you'll name that, you'll name anything. Ate too much indeed! Do you think I was going to pay for a dinner, and eat nothing? No, Mr. Caudle; it's a good thing for you that I know a little more of the value of money than that.

"But, of course, you were better engaged than in attending to me. Mr. Prettyman came on board at Gravesend. A planned thing, of course. You think I didn't see him give you a letter. *It wasn't a letter; it was a newspaper?* I daresay; ill as I was, I had my eyes. It was the smallest newspaper I ever saw, that's all. But of course, a letter from Miss Prettyman——Now, Caudle, if you begin to cry out in that manner, I'll get up. Do you forget that you're not at your own house? making that noise! Disturbing everybody! Why we shall have the landlord up! *And you could* smoke and drink "forward" as you called it.

What? *You couldn't smoke anywhere else?* That's nothing to do with it. Yes; forward. What a pity that Miss Prettyman wasn't with you. I'm sure nothing could be too forward for her. No, I won't hold my tongue; and I ought not to be ashamed of myself. It isn't treason, is it, to speak of Miss Prettyman? After all I've suffered to day, and I'm not to open my lips! Yes; I'm to be brought away from my own home, dragged down here to the sea-side, and made ill; and I'm not to speak. I should like to know what next.

"It's a mercy that some of the dear children were not drowned; not that their father would have cared, so long as he could have had his brandy and cigars. Peter was as near through one of the holes as—*It's no such thing?* It's very well for you to say so, but you know what an inquisitive boy he is, and how he likes to wander among steam-engines. No, I won't let you sleep. What a man you are! What? *I've said that before?* That's no matter; I'll say it again. Go to sleep, indeed! as if one could never have a little rational conversation. No, I shan't be too late for the Margate boat in the morning; I can wake up at what hour I like, and you ought to know that by this time.

"A miserable creature they must have thought me in the ladies' cabin, with nobody coming down to see how I was. *You came a dozen times?* No, Caudle, that won't do. I know better. You never came at all. Oh, no! cigars and brandy took all your attention. And when I was so ill, that I didn't know a single thing that was going on about me, and you never came. Every other woman's husband was there—ha! twenty times. And what must have been my feelings to hear 'em tapping at the door, and making all sorts of kind inquiries—something like husbands!—and I was left to be ill alone? Yes; and you want to get me into an argument. You want to know, if I was so ill that I knew nothing, how could I know that you didn't come to the cabin-door? That's just like your aggravating way; but I'm not to be caught in that manner, Caudle. No."

"It is very possible," writes Caudle, "that she talked two hours more: but, happily, the wind got suddenly up—the waves bellowed—and, soothed by the sweet lullaby (to say nothing of the Dolphin's brandy-and-water), I somehow sank to repose."

LECTURE XXV.

MRS. CAUDLE, WEARIED OF MARGATE, HAS "A GREAT DESIRE TO SEE FRANCE."

"ARN'T you tired, Caudle? *No?* Well, was there ever such a man! But nothing ever tires you. Of course, it's all very well for you: yes, you can read your newspapers and—What? *So can I?* And I wonder what would become of the children if I did! No; it's enough for their father to lose his precious time, talking about politics, and bishops, and lords, and a pack of people who wouldn't care a pin if we hadn't a roof to cover us—it's well enough for—no, Caudle, no: I'm not going to worry you; I never worried you yet, and it isn't likely I should begin now. But that's always the way with you—always. I'm sure we should be the happiest couple alive, only you do so like to have all the talk to yourself. We're out upon pleasure, and therefore let's be comfortable. Still, I must say it: when you like, you're an aggravating man, Caudle, and you know it.

"*What have you done now?* There, now; we won't talk of it. No; let's go to sleep: otherwise, we shall quarrel—I know we shall. What have you done, indeed! That I can't leave my home for a few days, but I must be insulted! Everybody upon the pier saw it. *Saw what?* How can you lie there in the bed and ask me? Saw what, indeed! Of course, it was a planned thing!—regularly settled before you left London. Oh yes; I like your innocence, Mr. Caudle; not knowing what I'm talking about. It's a heart-breaking thing for a woman to say of her own husband; but you've been a wicked man to me. Yes: and all your tossing and tumbling about in the bed won't make it any better.

"Oh, it's easy enough to call a woman 'a dear soul.' I must be very dear, indeed, to you, when you bring down Miss Prettyman to—there now; you needn't shout like a wild savage. Do you know that you're not in your own house—do you know that we're in lodgings? What do you suppose the people will think of us? You needn't call out in that manner, for they can hear every word that's said. What do you say? *Why don't I hold my tongue then?* To be sure; anything for an excuse with you. Anything to stop my mouth. Miss Prettyman's to follow you here, and I'm to say nothing. I know she *has* followed you; *and if you were* to go before a magistrate, and take a shilling

oath to the contrary, I wouldn't believe you. No, Caudle; I wouldn't.

"*Very well then?* Ha! what a heart you must have, to say 'very well;' and after the wife I've been to you. I'm to be brought from my own home—dragged down here to the sea-side—to be laughed at before the world—don't tell me! Do you think I didn't see how she looked at you—how she puckered up her farthing mouth—and—what? *Why did I kiss her, then?* What's that to do with it? Appearances are one thing, Mr. Caudle; and feelings are another. As if women can't kiss one another without meaning anything by it! And you—I could see you—looked as cold and as formal at her as—well, Caudle! I wouldn't be the hypocrite you are for the world!

"There, now; I've heard all that story. I dare say she did come down to join her brother. How very lucky, though, that you should be here! Ha! ha! how very lucky that—ugh! ugh! ugh! and with the cough I've got upon me—oh, you've a heart like a sea-side flint! Yes, that's right. That's just like your humanity. I can't catch a cold, but it must be my own fault—it must be my thin shoes. I dare say you'd like to see me in ploughman's boots; 'twould be no matter to you how I disfigured myself. Miss Prettyman's foot, now, would be another thing—no doubt.

"I thought when you would make me leave home—I thought we were coming here on pleasure: but it's always the way you embitter my life. The sooner that I'm out of the world, the better. What do you say? *Nothing?* But I know what you mean, better than if you talked an hour. I only hope you'll get a better wife, that's all, Mr. Caudle. What? *You'd not try?* Wouldn't you? I know you. In six months you'd fill up my place; yes, and dreadfully my dear children would suffer for it.

"Caudle, if you roar in that way, the people will give us warning to-morrow. *Can't I be quiet then?* Yes—that's like your artfulness: anything to make me hold my tongue. But we won't quarrel. I'm sure if it depended upon me, we might be as happy as doves. I mean it—and you needn't groan when I say it. Good night, Caudle. What do you say *Bless me!* Well, you are a dear soul, Caudle; and if it wasn't for that Miss Prettyman—no, I'm not torturing you. I know very well what I'm doing, and I wouldn't torture you for the world; but you don't know what the feelings of a wife are, Caudle; you don't.

"Caudle—I say, Caudle. Just a word, dear. *Well?* Now, why should you snap me up in that way. *You want to go to sleep?* So do I; but that's no reason you should speak to me in that manner. You know, dear, you once promised to take me to

France. *You don't recollect it?* Yes—that's like you; you don't recollect many things you've promised me; but I do. There's a boat goes on Wednesday to Boulogne, and comes back the day afterwards. *What of it?* Why for that time we could leave the children with the girls, and go nicely. *Nonsense?* Of course; if I want anything it's always nonsense. Other men can take their wives half over the world; but you think it quite enough to bring me down here to this hole of a place, where I know every pebble on the beach like an old acquaintance—where there's nothing to be seen but the same machines—the same jetty—the same donkeys—the same everything. But then, I'd forgot; Margate has an attraction for you—Miss Prettyman's here. No; I'm not censorious, and I wouldn't backbite an angel; but the way in which that young woman walks the sands at all hours—there! there!—I've done: I can't open my lips about that creature but you always storm.

"You know that I always wanted to go to France; and you bring me down here only on purpose that I should see the French cliffs—just to tantalise me, and for nothing else. If I'd remained at home—and it was against my will I ever came here—I should never have thought of France; but,—to have it staring in one's face all day, and not be allowed to go! it's worse than cruel, Mr. Caudle—it's brutal. Other people can take their wives to Paris; but you always keep me moped up at home. And what for? Why, that I may know nothing—yes; just on purpose to make me look little and for nothing else.

"*Heaven bless the woman?* Ha! you've good reason to say that, Mr. Caudle; for I'm sure she's little blessed by you. She's been kept a prisoner all her life—has never gone anywhere—oh yes! that's your old excuse,—talking of the children. I want to go to France, and I should like to know what the children have to do with it? They're not babies *now*—are they? But you've always thrown the children in my face. If Miss Prettyman—there now; do you hear what you've done—shouting in that manner? The other lodgers are knocking overhead: who do you think will have the face to look at 'em to-morrow morning? *I* shan't—breaking people's rest in that way!

"Well, Caudle—I declare it's getting daylight, and what an obstinate man you are!—tell me, shall I go to France?"

"I forget," says Caudle, "my precise answer; but I think I gave her a very wide permission to go somewhere, whereupon, though not without remonstrance as to the place—she went to sleep."

LECTURE XXVI.

MRS. CAUDLE'S FIRST NIGHT IN FRANCE.—"SHAMEFUL INDIFFERENCE" OF CAUDLE AT THE BOULOGNE CUSTOM HOUSE.

"I SUPPOSE, Mr. Caudle, you call yourself a man? I'm sure, such men should never have wives. If I could have thought it possible you'd have behaved as you have done—and I might, if I hadn't been a forgiving creature, for you've never been like anybody else—if I could only have thought it, you'd never have dragged me to foreign parts. Never! Well, I *did* say to myself, if he goes to France, perhaps he may catch a little politeness—but no: you began as Caudle, and as Caudle you'll end. I'm to be neglected through life, now. Oh yes! I've quite given up all thoughts of anything but wretchedness—I've made up my mind to misery, now. *You're glad of it?* Well, you must have a heart to say that. I declare to you, Caudle, as true as I'm an ill-used woman, if it wasn't for the dear children far away in blessed England—if it wasn't for them, I'd never go back with you. No: I'd leave you in this very place. Yes; I'd go into a convent; for a lady on board told me there was plenty of 'em here. I'd go and be a nun for the rest of my days, and—I see nothing to laugh at, Mr. Caudle; that you should be shaking the bed-things up and down in that way.—But you always laugh at people's feelings; I wish you'd only some yourself. I'd be a nun, or a Sister of Charity. *Impossible?* Ha! Mr. Caudle, you don't know even now what I can be when my blood's up. You've trod upon the worm long enough; some day won't you be sorry for it?

"Now none of your profane cryings out! You needn't talk about Heaven in that way: I'm sure you're the last person who ought. What I say is this. Your conduct at the Custom House was shameful—cruel! And in a foreign land too! But you brought me here that I might be insulted; you'd no other reason for dragging me from England. Ha! let me once get home, Mr. Caudle, and you may wear your tongue out before you get me into outlandish places again. *What have you done?* There now; that's where you're so aggravating. You behave worse than any Turk to me,—what? *You wish you were a Turk?* Well, I think that's a pretty wish before your lawful wife! Yes—a nice Turk you'd make, wouldn't you? Don't think it.

"*What have you done?* Well, it's a good thing I can't see you, for I'm sure you must blush. Done, indeed! Why, when the

brutes searched my basket at the Custom House! *A regular thing, is it?* Then if you knew that, why did you bring me here? No man who respected his wife would. And you could stand by, and see that fellow with moustachios rummage my basket; and pull out my night-cap and rumple the borders, and—well! if you'd had the proper feelings of a husband, your blood would have boiled again. But no! There you stood looking as mild as butter at the man, and never said a word; not when he crumpled my night-cap—it went to my heart like a stab—crumpled it as if it was any duster. I dare say if it had been Miss Prettyman's night-cap—oh, I don't care about your groaning—if it had been her night-cap, her hair-brush, her curl-papers, you'd have said something then. Oh, anybody with the spirit of a man would have spoken out if the fellow had had a thousand swords at his side. Well, all I know is this: if I'd have married somebody I could name, he wouldn't have suffered me to be treated in that way, not he!

"Now, don't hope to go to sleep, Mr. Caudle, and think to silence me in that manner. I know your art, but it won't do. It wasn't enough that my basket was turned topsy-turvy, but before I knew it, they spun me into another room, and—*How could you help that?* You never tried to help it. No; although it was a foreign land, and I don't speak French—not but what I know a good deal more of it than some people who give themselves airs about it—though I don't speak their nasty gibberish, still you let them take me away, and never cared how I was ever to find you again. In a strange country, too! But I've no doubt that that's what you wished: yes, you'd have been glad enough to have got rid of me in that cowardly manner. If I could only know your secret thoughts, Caudle, that's what you brought me here for, to lose me. And after the wife I've been to you!

"What are you crying out? *For mercy's sake?* Yes; a great deal you know about mercy! Else you'd never have suffered me to be twisted into that room. To be searched, indeed! As if I'd anything smuggled about me. Well, I will say it; after the way in which I've been used, if you'd the proper feelings of a man, you wouldn't sleep again for six months. Well, I know there was nobody but women there; but that's nothing to do with it. I'm sure, if I'd been taken up for picking pockets, they couldn't have used me worse. To be treated so—and 'specially by one's own sex!—it's *that* that aggravates me.

"And that's all you can say? *What could you do?* Why, break open the door; I'm sure you must have heard my voice: you shall never make me believe you couldn't hear that. Whenever I shall sew the strings on again, I can't tell. If they didn't

turn me out like a ship in a storm, I'm a sinner! And you laughed! *You didn't laugh?* Don't tell me; you laugh when you don't know anything about it; but I do.

"And a pretty place you have brought me to. A most respectable place I must say! Where the women walk about without any bonnets to their heads, and the fish-girls with their bare legs—well, you don't catch me eating any fish while I'm here. *Why not?* Why not,—do you think I'd encourage people of that sort?

"What do you say? *Good night?* It's no use your saying that—I can't go to sleep so soon as you can. Especially with a door that has such a lock as that to it. How do we know who may come in? What? *All the locks are bad in France?* The more shame for you to bring me to such a place, then. It only shows how you value me.

"Well, I dare say you are tired. *I* am! But then, see what I've gone through. Well, we won't quarrel in a barbarous country. We won't do that. Caudle, dear,—what's the French for lace? I know it, only I forget it. The French for lace, love? What! *Dentelle?* Now, you're not deceiving me? *You never deceived me yet?* Oh! don't say that. There isn't a married man in this blessed world can put his hand upon his heart in bed, and say that. French for lace, dear? Say it again. *Dentelle?* Ha! Dentelle! Good night, dear. Dentelle! Den—telle."

"I afterwards," writes Caudle, "found out to my cost wherefore she enquired about lace. For she went out in the morning with the landlady to buy a veil, giving only four pounds for what she could have bought in England for forty shillings!"

LECTURE XXVII.

MRS. CAUDLE RETURNS TO HER NATIVE LAND. "UNMANLY CRUELTY" OF CAUDLE, WHO HAS REFUSED "TO SMUGGLE A FEW THINGS" FOR HER.

"THERE, it isn't often that I ask you to do anything for me, Mr. Caudle, goodness knows! and when I do, I'm always refused—of course. Oh yes! anybody but your own lawful wife. Every other husband aboard the boat could behave like a husband—but I was left to shift for myself. To be sure, that's nothing new; I always am. Every other man, worthy to be called a man, could smuggle a few things for his wife—but I might as well be alone

in the world. Not one poor half-dozen of silk stockings could you put in your hat for me; and everybody else was rolled in lace, and I don't know what. Eh? What, Mr. Caudle? *What do I want with silk stockings?* Well,—it's come to something now! There was a time, I believe, when I had a foot—yes, and an ankle, too: but when once a woman's married, she has nothing of the sort; of course. No: I'm *not* a cherub, Mr. Caudle; don't say that. I know very well what I am.

"I dare say now, you'd have been delighted to smuggle for Miss Prettyman? Silk stockings become her! *You wish Miss Prettyman was in the moon?* Not you, Mr. Caudle; that's only your art—your hypocrisy. A nice person too she'd be for the moon: it would be none the brighter for her being in it, I know. And when you saw the Custom House officers look at me, as though they were piercing me through, what was your conduct? Shameful. You twittered about, and fidgetted, and flushed up as if I really *was* a smuggler. *So I was?* What had that to do with it? It wasn't the part of a husband I think, to fidget in that way, and show it. *You couldn't help it?* Humph! And you call yourself a person of strong mind, I believe? One of the lords of the creation! Ha! ha! couldn't help it!

"But I may do all I can to save the money, and this is always my reward. Yes, Mr. Caudle, I shall save a great deal. *How much?* I sha'n't tell you: I know your meanness—you'd want to stop it out of the house allowance. No: it's nothing to you where I got the money from to buy so many things. The money was my own. Well, and if it was yours first, that's nothing to do with it. No; I hav'n't saved it out of the puddings. But it's always the woman who saves who's despised. It's only your fine-lady wives who're properly thought of. If I was to ruin you, Caudle, then you'd think something of me.

"I sha'n't go to sleep. It's very well for you who're no sooner in bed, than you're fast as a church; but I can't sleep in that way. It's my mind keeps me awake. And after all, I do feel so happy to-night, it's very hard I can't enjoy my thoughts. *No: I can't think in silence!* There's much enjoyment in that to be sure! I've no doubt now you could listen to Miss Prettyman—oh, I don't care, I will speak. It was a little more than odd, I think, that she should be on the jetty when the boat came in. Ha! she'd been looking for you all the morning with a telescope, I've no doubt—she's bold enough for anything. And then how she sneered and giggled when she saw me,—and said 'how fat I'd got:' like her impudence, I think. What! *Well she might?* But I know what she wanted; yes—she'd have liked to have had *me searched.* She laughed on purpose.

"I only wish I'd taken two of the dear girls with me. What things I could have stitched about 'em! No—I'm not ashamed of myself to make my innocent children smugglers: the more innocent they looked, the better; but there you are with what you call your principles again; as if it wasn't given to everybody by nature to smuggle. I'm sure of it—it's born with us. And nicely I've cheated 'em this day. Lace, and velvet, and silk stockings, and other things,—to say nothing of the tumblers and decanters. No: I didn't look as if I wanted a direction, for fear somebody should break me. That's another of what you call your jokes; but you should keep 'em for those who like 'em. *I* don't.

"*What have I made after all?* I've told you—you shall never never know. Yes, I know you'd been fined a hundred pounds if they'd searched me; but I never meant that they should. I dare say you wouldn't smuggle—oh no! you don't think it worth your while. You're quite a conjurer, you are, Caudle. Ha! ha! ha! *What am I laughing at?* Oh, you little know—such a clever creature! Ha! ha! Well, now, I'll tell you. I knew what an unaccommodating animal you were, so I made you smuggle whether or not. *How?* Why, when you were out at the *Café*, I got your great rough coat, and if I didn't stitch ten yards of best black velvet under the lining I'm a sinful woman! And to see how innocent you looked when the officers walked round and round you! It was a happy moment, Caudle, to see you.

"What do you call it? *A shameful trick—unworthy of a wife? I couldn't care much for you?* As if I didn't prove that, by trusting you with ten yards of velvet. But I don't care what you say: I've saved everything—all but that beautiful English novel, that I've forgot the name of. And if they didn't take it out of my hand, and chopped it to bits like so much dog's-meat. *Served me right?* And when I so seldom buy a book! No: I don't see how it served me right. If you can buy the same book in France for four shillings that people here have the impudence to ask more than a guinea for—well, if they *do* steal it, that's their affair, not ours. As if there was anything in a book to steal!

"And now, Caudle, when are you going home! What? *Our time isn't up?* That's nothing to do with it. If we even lose a week's lodging—and we mayn't do that—we shall save it again in living. But you're such a man! Your home's the last place with you. I'm sure I don't get a wink of a night, thinking what may happen. Three fires last week; and any one might as well have been at our house as not. *No—they mightn't?* Well, you know what I mean—but you're such a man!

"I'm sure, too, we've had quite enough of this place. But there's no keeping you out of the libraries, Caudle. You're getting quite a gambler. And I don't think it's a nice example to set to your children, raffling as you do for French clocks and I don't know what. But that's not the worst; you never win anything. Oh, I forgot. Yes; a needle-case, that under my nose you gave to Miss Prettyman. A nice thing for a married man to make presents: and to such a creature as that, too. A needle-case! I wonder whenever she has a needle in *her* hand!

"I know I shall feel ill with anxiety if I stop here. Nobody left in the house but that Mrs. Closepeg. And she is such a stupid woman. It was only last night that I dreamt I saw our cat quite a skeleton, and the canary stiff on its back at the bottom of the cage. You know, Caudle, I'm never happy when I'm away from home; and yet you will stay here. No, home's my comfort; I never want to stir over the threshold, and you know it. If thieves were to break in, what could that Mrs. Closepeg do against 'em? And so, Caudle, you'll go home on Saturday? Our dear—dear home! On Saturday, Caudle?"

"What I answered," says Caudle, "I forget; but I know that on the Saturday, we were once again shipped on board the *Red Rover*."

LECTURE XXVIII.

MRS. CAUDLE HAS RETURNED HOME.—THE HOUSE (OF COURSE) "NOT FIT TO BE SEEN." MR. CAUDLE, IN SELF-DEFENCE, TAKES A BOOK.

"AFTER all, Caudle, it is something to get into one's own bed again. I *shall* sleep to-night. What! *You're glad of it?* That's like your sneering; I know what you mean. Of course; I never can think of making myself comfortable, but you wound my feelings. If you cared for your own bed like any other man, you'd not have staid out till this hour. Don't say that I drove you out of the house as soon as we came in it. I only just spoke about the dirt and the dust,—but the fact is, you'd be happy in a pig-sty! I thought I could have trusted that Mrs. Closepeg with untold gold; and did you only see the hearth-rug? When we left home there was a tiger in it: I should like to know who could make out the tiger, now? Oh, it's very well for you to swear at the tiger, but swearing won't revive the rug again. Else you *might swear.*

"You could go out and make yourself comfortable at your club. You little know how many windows are broken. How many do you think? No: I sha'n't tell you to-morrow—you shall know now. I'm sure. Talking about getting health at Margate; all my health went away directly I went into the kitchen. There's dear mother's china bowl cracked in two places. I could have sat down and cried when I saw it: a bowl I can recollect when I was a child. Eh? *I should have locked it up then?* Yes; that's your feeling for anything of mine. I only wish it had been your punch-bowl; but, thank goodness! I think that's chipped.

"Well, you haven't answered about the windows—you can't guess how many? *You don't care?* Well, if nobody caught cold but you, it would be little matter. Six windows clean out, and three cracked! *You can't help it?* I should like to know where the money's to come from to mend 'em! They shan't be mended, that's all. Then you'll see how respectable the house will look. But I know very well what you think. Yes; you're glad of it. You think that this will keep me at home—but I'll never stir out again. Then you can go to the sea-side by yourself; then, perhaps, you can be happy with Miss Prettyman? —Now, Caudle, if you knock the pillow with your fist in that way, I'll get up. It's very odd that I can't mention that person's name, but you begin to fight the bolster, and do I don't know what. There must be something in it, or you wouldn't kick about so. A guilty conscience needs no—but you know what I mean.

"She wasn't coming to town for a week; and then, of a sudden, she'd had a letter. I dare say she had. And then, as she said, it would be company for her to come with us. No doubt. She thought I should be ill again, and down in the cabin: but with all her art, she does not know the depth of me—quite. Not but what I was ill; though, like a brute, you wouldn't see it.

"What do you say? *Good night, love?* Yes: you can be very tender, I dare say—like all of your sex—to suit your own ends: but I can't go to sleep with my head full of the house. The fender in the parlour will never come to itself again. I haven't counted the knives yet, but I've made up my mind that half of 'em are lost. No: I don't always think the worst; no, and I don't make myself unhappy before the time; but of course, that's my thanks for caring about your property. If there arn't spiders in the curtains as big as nutmegs, I'm a wicked creature. Not a broom has the whole place seen since I've been away. But as soon as I get up, won't I rummage the house out, that's all. I

hadn't the heart to look at my pickles; but for all I left the door locked, I'm sure the jars have been moved. Yes; you can swear at pickles when you're in bed; but nobody makes more noise about 'em when you want 'em.

"I only hope they've been to the wine-cellar: then you may know what my feelings are. That poor cat, too—What? *You hate cats?* Yes, poor thing! because she's my favourite—that's it. If that cat could only speak—What? *It isn't necessary?* I don't know what you mean, Mr. Caudle: but if that cat could only speak, she'd tell me how she's been cheated. Poor thing! I know where the money's gone to that I left for her milk—I know. Why what have you got there, Mr. Caudle? A book? What! *If you arn't allowed to sleep, you'll read?* Well, now it is come to something! If that isn't insulting a wife to bring a book to bed, I don't know what wedlock is. But you sha'n't read, Caudle; no you sha'n't; not while I've strength to get up and put out a candle.

"And that's like your feelings! You can think a great deal of trumpery books; yes, you can't think too much of the stuff that's put into print; but for what's real and true about you, why you've the heart of a stone. I should like to know what that book's about? What? *Milton's Paradise Lost?* I thought some rubbish of the sort—something to insult me. A nice book, I think, to read in bed; and a very respectable person he was who wrote it. *What do I know of him?* Much more than you think. A very pretty fellow, indeed, with his six wives. What? *He hadn't six—he'd only three?* That's nothing to do with it; but of course you'll take his part. Poor women! A nice time they had with him, I dare say! And I've no doubt, Mr. Caudle, you'd like to follow Mr. Milton's example: else you wouldn't read the stuff he wrote. But you don't use me as he treated the poor souls who married him. Poets, indeed! I'd make a law against any of 'em having wives except upon paper; for goodness help the dear creaturss tied to them! Like innocent moths lured by a candle! Talking of candles, you don't know that the lamp in the passage is split to bits! I say you don't—do you hear me, Mr. Caudle? Won't you answer? Do you know where you are? What? *In the Garden of Eden?* Are you? Then you've no business there at this time of night."

"And saying this," writes Caudle, "she scrambled from the bed, and put out the light."

LECTURE XXIX.

MRS. CAUDLE THINKS "THE TIME HAS COME TO HAVE A COTTAGE OUT OF TOWN."

"CAUDLE, you ought to have had something nice to-night; for you're not well, love—I know you're not. Ha! that's like you men,—so headstrong! You will have it that nothing ails you; but I can tell, Caudle. The eye of a wife—and such a wife as I've been to you—can at once see whether a husband's well or not. You've been turning like tallow all the week; and what's more you eat nothing, now. It makes me melancholy to see you at a joint. I don't say anything at dinner before the children; but I don't feel the less. No, no; you're not very well; and you're not as strong as a horse. Don't deceive yourself—nothing of the sort. No, and you don't eat as much as ever: and if you do, you don't eat with a relish, I'm sure of that. You can't deceive me there.

"But I know what's killing you. It's the confinement; it's the bad air you breathe; it's the smoke of London. Oh yes, I know your old excuse: you never found the air bad before. Perhaps not. But as people grow older, and get on in trade—and, after all, we've nothing to complain of, Caudle—London air always disagrees with 'em. Delicate health comes with money: I'm sure of it. What a colour you had once, when you'd hardly a sixpence; and now, look at you!

"'Twould add thirty years to your life—and think what a blessing that would be to me; not that I shall live a tenth part of the time—thirty years, if you'd take a nice little house somewhere at Brixton. *You hate Brixton?* I must say it, Caudle, that's so like you: any place that's really genteel, you can't abide. Now Brixton and Baalam Hill I think delightful. So select! There, nobody visits nobody, unless they're somebody. To say nothing of the delightful pews that make the churches so respectable!

"However, do as you like. If you won't go to Brixton, what do you say to Clapham Common? Oh, that's a very fine story! Never tell me! No; you wouldn't be left alone, a Robinson Crusoe with wife and children, because you're in the retail way. What! *The retired wholesales never visit the retired retails at Clapham?* Ha! that's only your old sneering at the world, Mr. Caudle; but I don't believe it. And after all, people should keep to their station, or what was this life made for? Suppose a

tallow-merchant does keep himself above a tallow-chandler,—I call it only a proper pride. What? *You call it the aristocracy of fat?* I don't know what you mean by aristocracy; but I suppose it's only another of your dictionary words, that's hardly worth the finding out.

"What do you say to Hornsey or Muswell Hill? Eh? *Too high?* What a man you are! Well then—Battersea? *Too low?* You're an aggravating creature, Caudle, you must own that! Hampstead, then? *Too cold?* Nonsense; it would brace you up like a drum, Caudle; and that's what you want. But you don't deserve anybody to think of your health or your comforts either. There's some pretty spots, I'm told, about Fulham. Now, Caudle, I won't have you say a word against Fulham. That must be a sweet place: dry, and healthy, and every comfort of life about it—else is it likely that a bishop would live there? Now, Caudle, none of your heathen principles —I won't hear 'em. I think what satisfies a bishop ought to content you; but the politics you learn at that club are dreadful. To hear you talk of bishops—well, I only hope nothing will happen to you, for the sake of the dear children!

"A nice little house and a garden! I know it—I was born for a garden! There's something about it makes one feel so innocent. My heart somehow always opens and shuts at roses. And then what nice currant wine we could make! And again, get 'em as fresh as you will, there's no radishes like your own radishes! They're ten times as sweet! What? *And twenty times as dear?* Yes; there you go! Anything that I fancy, you always bring up the expense.

"No, Mr. Caudle, I should not be tired of it in a month. I tell you I was made for the country. But here you've kept me—and much you've cared about my health—here, you've kept me in this filthy London, that I hardly know what grass is made of. Much you care for your wife and family to keep 'em here to be all smoked like bacon. I can see it—it's stopping the children's growth; they'll be dwarfs, and have their father to thank for it. If you'd the heart of a parent, you couldn't bear to look at their white faces. Dear little Dick! he makes no breakfast. What? *He ate six slices this morning?* A pretty father you must be to count 'em. But that's nothing to what the dear child could do, if, like other children, he'd a fair chance.

"Ha! and when we could be so comfortable! But it's always the case, you never will be comfortable with me. How nice and fresh you'd come up to business every morning; and what pleasure it would be for me to put a tulip or a pink in your button-hole, just, as I may say, to ticket you from the country.

"But then, Caudle, you never were like any other man! But I know why you won't leave London. Yes, I know. Then, you think, you couldn't go to your filthy club—that's it. Then you'd be obliged to be at home, like any other decent man. Whereas, you might, if you liked, enjoy yourself under your own apple-tree, and I'm sure I should never say anything about your tobacco out of doors. My only wish is to make you happy, Caudle, and you won't let me do it.

"You don't speak, love? Shall I look about a house to-morrow? It will be a broken day with me, for I'm going out to have little pet's ears bored—What? *You won't have her ears bored?* And why not, I should like to know? *It's a barbarous, savage custom?* Oh, Mr. Caudle! the sooner you go away from the world, and live in a cave, the better. You're getting not fit for Christian society. What next? My ears were bored and—what? *So are yours?* I know what you mean—but that's nothing to do with it. My ears, I say, were bored, and so were dear mother's, and grandmother's before her; and I suppose there were no more savages in our family than in yours, Mr. Caudle? Besides,—why should little pet's ears go naked any more than any of her sisters'? They wear ear-rings, you never objected before. What? *You've learned better now?* Yes, that's all with your filthy politics again. You'd shake all the world up in a dice-box, if you'd your way: not that you care a pin about the world, only you'd like to get a better throw for yourself,—that's all. But little pet *shall* be bored, and don't think to prevent it.

"I suppose she's to be married some day, as well as her sisters? And who'll look at a girl without ear-rings, I should like to know? If you knew any thing of the world, you'd know what a nice diamond ear-ring will sometimes do—when one can get it—before this. But I know why you can't abide ear-rings now; Miss Prettyman doesn't wear 'em; she would—I've no doubt—if she could only get 'em. Yes,—it's Miss Prettyman, who—

"There, Caudle, now be quiet, and I'll say no more about pet's ears at present. We'll talk when you're reasonable. I don't want to put you out of temper, goodness knows! And so, love, about the cottage? What? *'Twill be so far from business?* But it needn't be far, dearest. Quite a nice distance; so that on your late nights, you may always be at home, have your supper, get to bed, and all by eleven. Eh,—sweet one?"

"I don't know what I answered," says Caudle, "but I know this; in less than a fortnight I found myself in a sort of a green bird-cage of a house, which my wife—gentle satirist—insisted upon calling 'The Turtle-Dovery.'"

LECTURE XXX.

MRS. CAUDLE COMPLAINS OF THE "TURTLE-DOVERY."—DISCOVERS BLACK-BEETLES.—THINKS IT "NOTHING BUT RIGHT" THAT CAUDLE SHOULD SET UP A CHAISE.

"You'd never have got me into this wilderness of a place, Mr. Caudle, if I'd only have thought what it was. Yes, that's right: throw it in my teeth that it was my choice—that's manly, isn't it? When I saw the place the sun was out, and it looked beautiful—now, it's quite another thing. No, Mr. Caudle; I don't expect you to command the sun,—and if you talk about Joshua in that infidel way, I'll leave the bed. No, sir; I don't expect the sun to be in your power, but that's nothing to do with it. I talk about one thing, and you always start another. But that's your art.

"I'm sure a woman might as well be buried alive as live here. In fact, I am buried alive; I feel it. I stood at the window three hours this blessed day, and saw nothing but the postman. No: it isn't a pity that I hadn't something better to do; I had plenty: but that's my business, Mr. Caudle. I suppose I'm to be mistress of my own house? If not, I'd better leave it.

"And the very first night we were here, you know it, the black-beetles came into the kitchen. If the place didn't seem spread all over with a black cloth, I'm a story teller. What are you coughing at, Mr. Caudle? I see nothing to cough at. But that's just your way of sneering. Millions of black-beetles! And as the clock strikes eight, out they march. What? *They're very punctual?* I know that. I only wish other people were half as punctual: 'twould save other people's money and other people's peace of mind. You know I hate a black beetle! No: I don't hate so many things. But I do hate black beetles, as I hate ill-treatment, Mr. Caudle. And now I have enough of both, goodness knows!

"Last night they came into the parlour. Of course, in a night or two, they'll walk up into the bed-room. They'll be here—regiments of 'em—on the quilt. But what do you care? Nothing of the sort ever touches you: but you know how they come to me; and that's why you're so quiet. A pleasant thing to have black-beetles in one's bed! *Why don't I poison 'em?* A pretty matter, indeed, to have poison in the house! Much you must *think of the* dear children. A nice place too, to be called the

Turtle-Dovery! *Didn't I christen it myself?* I know that,—but then I knew nothing of the black-beetles. Besides, names of houses are for the world outside; not that anybody passes to see ours. Didn't Mrs. Digby insist on calling their new house 'Love-in-Idleness,' though everybody knew that that wretch Digby was always beating her? Still, when folks read 'Rose Cottage' on the wall, they seldom think of the lots of thorns that are inside. In this world, Mr. Caudle, names are sometimes quite as good as things.

"That cough again! You've got a cold, and you'll always be getting one—for you'll always be missing the omnibus as you did on Tuesday,—and always be getting wet. No constitution can stand it, Caudle. You don't know what I felt when I heard it rain on Tuesday, and thought you might be in it. What? *I'm very good?* Yes, I trust so: I try to be so, Caudle. And so, dear, I've been thinking that we'd better keep a chaise. *You can't afford it, and you won't?* Don't tell me: I know you'd save money by it. I've been reckoning what you lay out in omnibusses; and if you'd a chaise of your own—besides the gentility of the thing—you'd be money in pocket. And then again, how often I could go with you to town,—and how, again, I could call for you when you liked to be a little late at the club, dear? Now, you're obliged to be hurried away, I know it, when, if you'd only a carriage of your own, you could stay and enjoy yourself. And after your work you want enjoyment. Of course, I can't expect you always to run home directly to me: and I don't, Caudle; and you know it.

"A nice, neat, elegant little chaise. What? *You'll think of it?* There's a love! You are a good creature, Caudle; and 'twill make me so happy to think you don't depend upon an omnibus. A sweet little carriage, with our arms beautifully painted on the panels. What? *Arms are rubbish; and you don't know that you have any?* Nonsense: to be sure you have —and if not, of course they're to be had for money. I wonder where Chalkpit's, the milkman's arms came from? I suppose you can buy 'em at the same place. He used to drive a green cart; and now he's got a close yellow carriage, with two large tortoise-shell cats, with their whiskers as if dipt in cream, standing on their hind legs upon each door, with a heap of Latin underneath. You may buy the carriage, if you please, Mr. Caudle; but unless your arms are there, you won't get me to enter it. Never! I'm not going to look less than Mrs. Chalkpit.

"Besides, if you hav'n't arms, I'm sure my family have, and a wife's arms are quite as good as a husband's. I'll write to-

morrow to dear mother, to know what we took for our family arms. What do you say? What? *A mangle in a stone-kitchen proper?* Mr. Caudle, you're always insulting my family—always: but you shall not put me out of temper to-night. Still, if you don't like our arms, find your own. I dare say you could have found 'em fast enough, if you'd married Miss Prettyman. Well, I will be quiet; and I won't mention that lady's name. A nice lady she is! I wonder how much she spends in paint! Now, don't I tell you I won't say a word more, and yet you will kick about!

"Well, we'll have the carriage and the family arms? No, I don't want the family legs too. Don't be vulgar, Mr. Caudle. You might, perhaps, talk in that way before you'd money in the Bank; but it doesn't at all become you now. The carriage and the family arms! We've a country-house as well as the Chalkpits; and though they praise their place for a little Paradise, I dare say they've quite as many black-beetles as we have, and more too. The place quite looks it.

"Our carriage and our arms! And you know, love, it won't cost much—next to nothing—to put a gold band about Sam's hat on a Sunday. No: I don't want a full-blown livery. At least, not just yet. I'm told the Chalkpits dress their boy on a Sunday. like a dragon-fly; and I don't see why we shouldn't do what we like with our own Sam. Nevertheless, I'll be content with a gold band, and a bit of pepper-and-salt. No: I shall not cry out for plush next; certainly not. But I will have a gold band, and—*You won't; and I know it?* Oh yes! that's another of your crotchets, Mr. Caudle; like nobody else—you don't love liveries. I suppose when people buy their sheets, or their table cloths, or any other linen, they've a right to mark what they like upon it, haven't they? Well, then? You buy a servant, and you mark what you like upon him, and where's the difference? None, that I can see."

"Finally," says Caudle, "I compromised for a gig: but Sam did not wear pepper-and-salt and a gold band."

LECTURE XXXI.

MRS. CAUDLE COMPLAINS VERY BITTERLY THAT MR. CAUDLE HAS "BROKEN HER CONFIDENCE."

"You'll catch me, Mr. Caudle, telling you anything again. Now, I don't want to have any noise: I don't wish you to put yourself in a passion. All I say is this; never again do I open my lips to you about anybody. No: if man and wife can't be one, why there's an end of everything. Oh, you know very well what I mean, Mr. Caudle: you've broken my confidence in the most shameful, the most heartless way, and I repeat it—I can never be again to you as I have been. No: the little charm—it wasn't much—that remained about married life, is gone for ever. Yes; the bloom's quite wiped off the plum now.

"Don't be such a hypocrite, Caudle; don't ask me what I mean! Mrs. Badgerly has been here—more like a fiend, I'm sure, than a quiet woman. I haven't done trembling yet! You know the state of my nerves, too; you know—yes, sir, I *had* nerves when you married me; and I haven't just found 'em out. Well, you've something to answer for, I think. The Badgerlys are going to separate: she takes the girls, and he the boys, and all through you. How you can lay your head upon that pillow and think of going to sleep, I can't tell. *What have you done?* Well, you have a face to ask the question. Done? You've broken my confidence, Mr. Caudle: you've taken advantage of my tenderness, my trust in you as a wife—the more fool I for my pains!—and you've separated a happy couple for ever. No; I'm not talking in the clouds; I'm talking in your bed, the more my misfortune.

"Now, Caudle—yes, I shall sit up in the bed if I choose; I'm not going to sleep till I have this properly explained; for Mrs. Badgerly shan't lay her separation at my door. You won't deny that you were at the Club last night? No, bad as you are, Caudle—and though you're my husband, I can't think you a good man; I try to do, but I can't—bad as you are, you can't deny you were at the Club. What? *You don't deny it?* That's what I say—you can't. And now, answer me this question. What did you say—before the whole world—of Mr. Badgerly's whiskers? There's nothing to laugh at, Caudle; if you'd have seen that poor woman, to-day, you'd have a heart of stone to laugh.

What did you say of his whiskers? Didn't you tell everybody he dyed 'em? Didn't you hold the candle up to 'em, as you said, to show the purple? *To be sure you did!* Ha! people who break jokes never care about breaking hearts. Badgerly went home like a demon; called his wife a false woman: vowed he'd never enter a bed again with her, and, to show he was in earnest, slept all night upon the sofa. He said it was the dearest secret of his life; said she had told me; and that I had told you; and that's how it had come out. What do you say? *Badgerly was right? I did tell you?* I know I did: but when dear Mrs. Badgerly mentioned the matter to me and a few friends, as we were all laughing at tea together, quite in a confidential way—when she just spoke of her husband's whiskers, and how long he was over 'em every morning—of course, poor soul! she never thought it was to be talked of in the world again. Eh? *Then I had no right to tell you of it?* And that's the way I'm thanked for my confidence. Because I don't keep a secret from you, but show you, I may say, my naked soul, Caudle, that's how I'm rewarded. Poor Mrs. Badgerly—for all her hard words—after she went away, I'm sure my heart quite bled for her. What do you say Mr. Caudle? *Serves her right—she should hold her tongue?* Yes; that's like your tyranny—you'd never let a poor woman speak. Eh—what, what Mr. Caudle?

"That's a very fine speech, I dare say; and wives are very much obliged to you, only there's not a bit of truth in it. No, we women don't get together, and pick our husbands to pieces, just as sometimes mischievous little girls rip up their dolls. That's an old sentiment of yours, Mr. Caudle: but I'm sure you've no occasion to say it of me. I hear a good deal of other peoples husbands, certainly; I can't shut my ears; I wish I could: but I never say anything about you,—and I might, and you know it—and there's somebody else that knows it, too. No: I sit still and say nothing; what I have in my own bosom about you, Caudle, will be buried with me. But I know what you think of wives. I heard you talking to Mr. Prettyman, when you little thought I was listening, and you didn't know much what you were saying—I heard you. 'My dear Prettyman,' says you, 'when some women get talking, they club all their husbands' faults together; just as children club their cakes and apples, to make a common feast for the whole set.' Eh? *You don't remember it?* But I do: and I remember, too, what brandy was left, when Prettyman went. 'Twould be odd if you could remember much about it, after that.

"And now you've gone and separated man and wife, and I'm to be blamed for it. You've not only carried misery into a

family, but broken my confidence. You've proved to me that henceforth I'm not to trust you with anything, Mr. Caudle. No: I'll lock up whatever I know in my own breast,—for now I find nobody, not even one's own husband, is to be relied upon. From this moment, I may look upon myself as a solitary woman. Now, it's no use your trying to go to sleep. What do you say? *You know that?* Very well. Now, I want to ask you one question more. Eh? *You want to ask me one?* Very well—go on—I'm not afraid to be catechised. I never dropt a syllable that as a wife I ought to have kept to myself—no, I'm not at all forgetting what I've said—and whatever you've got to ask me speak out at once. No—I don't want you to spare me; all I want you is to speak. *You will speak?* Well then, do.

"What? *Who told people you'd a false front tooth?* And is that all? Well, I'm sure—as if the world couldn't see it. I know I did just mention it once, but then I thought everybody knew it—besides, I was aggravated to do it; yes, aggravated. I remember it was that very day, at Mrs. Badgerly's, when husbands' whiskers came up. Well, after we'd done with them, somebody said something about teeth. Whereupon, Miss Prettyman—a minx! she was born to destroy the peace of families, I know she was: she was there; and if I'd only known that such a creature was——no, I'm not rambling, not at all, and I'm coming to the tooth. To be sure, this is a great deal you've got against me, isn't it? Well, somebody spoke about teeth, when Miss Prettyman, with one of her insulting leers, said, 'she thought Mr. Caudle had the whitest teeth she ever *had* beheld.' Of course, my blood was up—every wife's would be: and I believe I might have said, 'Yes, they were well enough; but when a young lady so very much praised a married man's teeth, she perhaps didn't know that one of the front ones was an elephant's.' Like her impudence!—I set *her* down for the rest of the evening. But I can see the humour you're in to-night. You only came to bed to quarrel, and I'm not going to indulge you. All I say is this, after the shameful mischief you've made at the Badgerlys', you never break my confidence again. Never—and now you know it."

Caudle hereupon writes—"And here she seemed inclined to sleep. Not for one moment did I think to prevent her."

LECTURE XXXII.

MRS. CAUDLE DISCOURSES OF MAIDS-OF-ALL-WORK AND MAIDS IN GENERAL. MR. CAUDLE'S "INFAMOUS BEHAVIOUR" TEN YEARS AGO.

"THERE now, it isn't my intention to say a word to-night, Mr. Caudle. No; I want to go to sleep, if I can; for after what I've gone through to-day, and with the head-ache I've got,—and if I haven't left my smelling-salts on the mantel-piece, on the right-hand corner just as you go into the room—nobody could miss it—I say, nobody could miss it—in a little green bottle, and ——well, there you lie like a stone, and I might perish and you wouldn't move. Oh, my poor head! But it may open and shut, and what do you care?

"Yes, that's like your feeling, just. I want my salts, and you tell me there's nothing like being still for a head-ache. Indeed? But I'm not going to be still; so don't you think it. That's just how a woman's put upon. But I know your aggravation—I know your art. You think to keep me quiet about that minx Kitty,—your favourite, sir! Upon my life, I'm not to discharge my own servant without—but she shall go. If I had to do all the work myself, she shouldn't stop under my roof. I can see how she looks down upon me. I can see a great deal, Mr. Caudle, that I never choose to open my lips about—but I can't shut my eyes. Perhaps it would have been better for my peace of mind if I always could. Don't say that. I'm not a foolish woman, and I know very well what I'm saying. I suppose you think I forget *that* Rebecca? I know it's ten years ago that she lived with us—but what's that to do with it? Things arn't the less true for being old, I suppose. No; and your conduct, Mr. Caudle, at that time—if it was a hundred years ago—I should never forget. *What? I shall always be the same silly woman?* I hope I shall—I trust I shall always have my eyes about me in my own house. Now, don't think of going to sleep, Caudle; because, as you've brought this up about that Rebecca, you shall hear me out. Well, I do wonder that you can name her! Eh? *You didn't name her?* That's nothing at all to do with it; for I know just as well what you think, as if you did. I suppose you'll say that you didn't drink a glass of wine to her? *Never?* So you said at the time, but I've thought of it for ten long years, and the *more I've* thought, the surer I am of it. And at that very time

—if you please to recollect—at that very time little Jack was a baby. I shouldn't have so much cared but for that; but he was hardly running alone, when you nodded and drank a glass of wine to that creature. No; I'm not mad, and I'm not dreaming. I saw how you did it,—and the hypocrisy made it worse and worse. I saw you when the creature was just behind my chair, you took up a glass of wine, and saying to me, 'Margaret,' and then lifting up your eyes at the bold minx, and saying, 'my dear,' as if you wanted me to believe that you spoke only to me, when I could see you laugh at her behind me. And at that time little Jack wasn't on his feet. What do you say? *Heaven forgive me?* Ha! Mr. Caudle, it's you who ought to ask for that: I'm safe enough, I am: it's you who should ask to be forgiven.

"No, I wouldn't slander a saint—and I didn't take away the girl's character for nothing. I know she brought an action for what I said; and I know you had to pay damages for what you call my tongue—I well remember all that. And serve you right; if you hadn't laughed at her, it wouldn't have happened. But if you will make free with such people, of course you're sure to suffer for it. 'Twould have served you right if the lawyer's bill had been double. Damages, indeed! Not that anybody's tongue could have damaged her!

"And now, Mr. Caudle, you're the same man you were ten years ago. What? *You hope so?* The more shame for you. At your time of life, with all your children growing up about you, to—*What am I talking of?* I know very well; and so would you, if you had any conscience, which you haven't. When I say I shall discharge Kitty, you say she's a very good servant, and I shan't get a better. But I know why you think her good; you think her pretty, and that's enough for you; as if girls who work for their bread have any business to be pretty,—which she isn't. Pretty servants, indeed! going mincing about with their fal-lal faces, as if even the flies would spoil 'em. But I know what a bad man you are—now, it's no use your denying it; for didn't I overhear your talking to Mr. Prettyman, and didn't you say that you couldn't bear to have ugly servants about you? I ask you,—didn't you say that? *Perhaps you did?* You don't blush to confess it? If your principles, Mr. Caudle, ar'n't enough to make a woman's blood run cold!

"Oh, yes! you've talked that stuff again and again; and once I might have believed it; but I know a little more of you now. You like to see pretty servants, just as you like to see pretty statues, and pretty pictures, and pretty flowers, and anything in nature that's pretty, just, as you say, for the eye to feed upon. Yes; I know your eyes,—very well. I know what they were ten

years ago; for shall I ever forget that glass of wine when little Jack was in arms? I don't care if it was a thousand years ago, it's as fresh as yesterday, and I never will cease to talk of it. When you know me, how can you ask it?

"And now you insist upon keeping Kitty, when there's no having a bit of crockery for her? That girl would break the Bank of England,—I know she would—if she was to put her hand upon it. But what's a whole set of blue china to her beautiful blue eyes? I know that's what you mean, though you don't say it.

"Oh, you needn't lie groaning there, for you don't think I shall ever forget Rebecca. Yes,—it's very well for you to swear at Rebecca now,—but you didn't swear at her then, Mr. Caudle, I know. 'Margaret my dear!' Well, how you can have the face to look at me—*You don't look at me?* The more shame for you.

"I can only say, that either Kitty leaves the house, or I do. Which is it to be, Mr. Caudle? Eh? *You don't care? Both?* But you're not going to get rid of me in that manner, I can tell you. But for that trollop—now, you may swear and rave as you like—*You don't intend to say a word more?* Very well; it's no matter what you say—her quarter's up on Tuesday, and go she shall. A soup-plate and a basin went yesterday.

"A soup-plate and a basin, and when I've the head-ache as I have, Mr. Caudle, tearing me to pieces! But I shall never be well in this world—never. A soup-plate and a basin!"

"She slept," writes Caudle, "and poor Kitty left on Tuesday."

LECTURE XXXIII.

MRS. CAUDLE HAS DISCOVERED THAT CAUDLE IS A RAILWAY DIRECTOR.

"When I took up the paper to-day, Caudle, you might have knocked me down with a feather! Now, don't be a hypocrite—you know what's the matter. And when you haven't a bed to lie upon, and are brought to sleep upon coal-sacks—and then I can tell you, Mr. Caudle, you may sleep by yourself—then you'll know what's the matter. Now, I've seen your name, and don't deny it. Yes,—the Eel-Pie Island Railway—and among the Directors, Job Caudle, Esq., of the Turtle-Dovery, and—no, I won't be quiet. It isn't often—goodness knows!—that I speak; *but seeing* what I do, I won't be silent. *What do I see?* Why,

there, Mr. Caudle, at the foot of the bed, I see all the blessed children in tatters—I see you in a gaol, and the carpets hung out at the windows.

"And now I know why you talk in your sleep about a broad and narrow gauge! I couldn't think what was on your mind,—but now it's out. Ha! Mr. Caudle, there's something about a broad and narrow way that I wish you'd remember—but you're turned quite a heathen: yes, you think of nothing but money now. *Don't I like money?* To be sure I do; but then I like it when I'm certain of it; no risks for me. Yes, it's all very well to talk about fortunes made in no time: they're like shirts made in no time—it's ten to one if they hang long together.

"And now it's plain enough why you can't eat or drink, or sleep, or do anything. All your mind's allotted into railways; for you shan't make me believe that Eel-Pie Island's the only one. Oh no! I can see by the looks of you. Why, in a little time, if you haven't as many lines in your face as there are lines laid down! Every one of your features seems cut up,—and all seem travelling from one another. Six months ago, Caudle, you hadn't a wrinkle; yes, you'd a cheek as smooth as any china, and now your face is like the map of England.

"At your time of life, too! You, who were for always going small and sure! You to make heads-and-tails of your money in this way! It's that stockbroker's dog at Flam Cottage—he's bitten you, I 'm sure of it. You're not fit to manage your own property now; and I should be only acting the part of a good wife, if I were to call in the mad-doctors.

"Well, I shall never know rest any more now. There won't be a soul knock at the door after this, that I shan't think it's the man coming to take possession. 'Twill be something for the Chalkpits to laugh at when we're sold up. I think I see 'em here, bidding for all our little articles of bigotry and virtue, and —what are you laughing at? *They're not bigotry and virtue; but bijouterie and vertu?* It's all the same: only you're never so happy as when you're taking me up.

"If I can tell what's come to the world, I'm a sinner! Everybody's for turning their farthings into double sovereigns and cheating their neighbours of the balance. And you, too—you're beside yourself, Caudle,—I'm sure of it. I've watched you when you thought me fast asleep. And then you've lain, and whispered and whispered, and then hugged yourself, and laughed at the bed-posts, as if you'd seen 'em turned to sovereign gold. I do believe that you sometimes think the patch-work quilt is made of thousand pound bank-notes.

"Well, when we're brought to the Union, then you'll find out

your mistake. But it will be a poor satisfaction for me every night to tell you of it. What, Mr. Caudle? *They won't let me tell you of it?* And you call that 'some comfort?' And after the wife I've been to you! But now I recollect. I think I've heard you praise that Union before; though, like a fond fool as I've always been, I never once suspected the reason of it.

"And now, of course, day and night you'll never be at home? No, you'll live and sleep at Eel-Pie Island! I shall be left alone with nothing but my thoughts, thinking when the broker will come, and you'll be with your brother directors. I may slave and I may toil to save sixpences; and you'll be throwing away hundreds. And then the expensive tastes you've got! Nothing good enough for you now. I'm sure you sometimes think yourself King Solomon. But that comes of making money—if, indeed, you have made any—without earning it. No: I don't talk nonsense: people *can* make money without earning it. And when they do, why it's like taking a lot of spirits at one draught; it gets into their head, and they don't know what they're about. And you're in that state now, Mr. Caudle: I'm sure of it, by the way of you. There's a tipsiness of the pocket as well as of the stomach,—and you're in that condition at this very moment.

"Not that I should so much mind—that is, if you *have* made money—if you'd stop at the Eel-Pie line. But I know what these things are: they're like treacle to flies: when men are well in 'em, they can't get out of 'em: or if they do, it's often without a feather to fly with. No: if you've really made money by the Eel-Pie line, and will give it to me to take care of for the dear children, why, perhaps, love, I'll say no more of the matter. What! *Nonsense?* Yes, of course: I never ask you for money, but that's the word.

"And now, catch you stopping at the Eel-Pie line! Oh no, I know your aggravating spirit. In a day or two I shall see another fine flourish in the paper, with a proposal for a branch from Eel-Pie Island to the Chelsea Bun-house. Give you a mile of rail, and—I know you men,—you'll take a hundred. Well, if it didn't make me quiver to read that stuff in the paper,—and your name to it! But I suppose it was Mr. Prettyman's work; for his precious name's among 'em. How you tell the people 'that eel-pies are now become an essential element of civilisation'—I learnt all the words by heart, that I might say 'em to you—'that the Eastern population of London are cut off from the blessings of such a necessary,—and that by means of the projected line eel-pies will be brought home to the business and bosoms of Ratcliffe-highway, and the adjacent dependencies.' *Well, when* you men—lords of the creation, as you call yourselves

—do get together to make up a company, or anything of the sort,—is there any story-book can come up to you? And so you look solemnly in one another's faces, and never so much as moving the corners of your mouths, pick one another's pockets. No I 'm not using hard words, Mr. Caudle—but only the words that's proper.

"And this I *must* say. Whatever you've got, I'm none the better for it. You never give me any of your Eel-Pie shares. What do you say? *You will give me some?* Not I—I'll have nothing to do with any wickedness of the kind. If, like any other husband, you choose to throw a heap of money into my lap—what? *You'll think of it? When the Eel-Pies go up?* Then I know what they're worth—they'll never fetch a farthing."

"She was suddenly silent"—writes Caudle—"and I was sinking into sleep, when she elbowed me, and cried, 'Caudle, do you think they'll be up to-morrow?'"

LECTURE XXXIV.

MRS. CAUDLE, SUSPECTING THAT MR. CAUDLE HAS MADE HIS WILL, IS "ONLY ANXIOUS AS A WIFE" TO KNOW ITS PROVISIONS.

"I ALWAYS said you'd a strong mind when you liked, Caudle; and what you've just been doing proves it. Some people won't make a will, because they think they must die directly afterwards. Now, you're above that, love, arn't you? Nonsense; you know very well what I mean. I know your will's made, for Scratcherly told me so. What? *You don't believe it?* Well, I'm sure! That's a pretty thing for a man to say to his wife. I know he's too much a man of business to talk; but I suppose there's a way of telling things without speaking them. And when I put the question to him, lawyer as he is, he hadn't the face to deny it.

"To be sure, it can be of no consequence to me whether your will is made or not. I shall not be alive, Mr. Caudle, to want anything: I shall be provided for a long time before your will's of any use. No, Mr. Caudle; I sha'n't survive you: and—though a woman's wrong to let her affection for a man be known, for then she's always taken advantage of—though I know it's foolish and weak to say so, still I don't want to survive you. How should I? No, no; don't say that: I'm not good for a hundred—I sha'n't see you out, and another husband too. What

a gross idea, Caudle! To imagine I'd ever think of marrying again. No—never! What? *That's what we all say?* Not at all; quite the reverse. To me the very idea of such a thing is horrible, and always was. Yes, I know very well that some do marry again,—but what they're made of, I'm sure I can't tell.—Ugh!

"There are men, I know, who leave their property in such a way that their widows, to hold it, must keep widows. Now, if there is anything in the world that is mean and small, it is that. Don't you think so too, Caudle? Why don't you speak, love? That's so like you! I never want a little quiet rational talk, but you want to go to sleep. But you never were like any other man! What? *How do I know?* There now,—that's so like your aggravating way. I never open my lips upon a subject, but you try to put me off. I've no doubt when Miss Prettyman speaks, you can answer *her* properly enough. There you are, again! Upon my life, it *is* odd; but I never can in the most innocent way mention that person's name that—*Why can't I leave her alone?* I'm sure—with all my heart! Who wants to talk about her? I don't: only you always will say something that's certain to bring up her name.

"What was I saying, Caudle? Oh, about the way some men bind their widows. To my mind, there is nothing so little. When a man forbids his wife to marry again without losing what he leaves—it's what I call selfishness after death. Mean to a degree! It's like taking his wife into the grave with him. Eh? *You never want to do that?* No, I'm sure of that, love: you're not the man to tie a woman up in that mean manner. A man who'd do that, would have his widow burnt with him, if he could—just as those monsters, that call themselves men, do in the Indies.

"However, it's no matter to me how you've made your will; but it may be to your second wife. What? *I shall never give you a chance?* Ha! you don't know my constitution after all, Caudle. I'm not at all the woman I was. I say nothing about 'em, but very often you don't know my feelings. And as we're on the subject, dearest, I have only one favour to ask. When you marry again—now it's no use your saying that. After the comforts you've known of marriage—what are you sighing at, dear?—after the comforts, you must marry again.—Now don't forswear yourself in that violent way, taking an oath that you know you must break—you couldn't help it, I'm sure of it; and I know you better than you know yourself. Well, all I ask is, love, because it's only for your sake, and it would make no difference to me then—how should it?—but all I ask is, don't marry

Miss Pret——There! there! I've done; I won't say another word about it; but all I ask is, don't. After the way you've been thought of, and after the comforts you've been used to, Caudle, she wouldn't be the wife for you. Of course, I could then have no interest in the matter—you might marry the Queen of England, for what it would be to me then—I'm only anxious about you. Mind, Caudle, I'm not saying anything against her; not at all; but there's a flightiness in her manner—I dare say, poor thing, she means no harm, and it may be, as the saying is, only her manner after all—still, there *is* a flightiness about her that, after what you've been used to, would make you very wretched. Now, if I may boast of anything, Caudle, it is my propriety of manner the whole of my life. I know that wives who're very particular, arn't thought as well of as those who're not—still, it's next to nothing to be virtuous, if people don't seem so. And virtue, Caudle—no, I'm not going to preach about virtue, for I never do. No; and I don't go about with my virtue, like a child with a drum, making all sorts of noises with it. But I know your principles. I shall never forget what I once heard you say to Prettyman: and it's no excuse that you'd taken so much wine you didn't know what you were saying at the time; for wine brings out men's wickedness, just as fire brings out spots of grease. *What did you say?* Why you said this:—'Virtue's a beautiful thing in women, when they don't make so much noise about it; but there's some women, who think virtue was given 'em, as claws were given to cats'—yes, cats was the word—'to do nothing but scratch with.' That's what you said. *You don't recollect a syllable of it?* No, that's it; when you're in that dreadful state, you recollect nothing: but it's a good thing I do.

"But we won't talk of that, love—that's all over: I dare say you meant nothing. But I'm glad you agree with me, that the man who'd tie up his widow, not to marry again, is a mean man. It makes me happy that you've that confidence in me to say that. *You never said it?* That's nothing to do with it—you've just as good as said it. No: when a man leaves all his property to his wife, without binding her hands from marrying again, he shows what a dependence he has upon her love. He proves to all the world what a wife she's been to him; and how, after his death, he knows she'll grieve for him. And then, of course, a second marriage never enters her head. But when she only keeps his money so long as she keeps a widow, why she's aggravated to take another husband. I'm sure of it; many a poor woman has been driven into wedlock again, only because she was spited into it by her husband's will. It's only natural to suppose it. If I

thought, Caudle, you could do such a thing, though it would break my heart to do it,—yet, though you were dead and gone, I'd show you I'd a spirit, and marry again directly. Not but what it's ridiculous my talking in such a way, as I shall go long before you; still, mark my words, and don't provoke me with any will of that sort, or I'd do it—as I'm a living woman in this bed to-night, I'd do it."

"I did not contradict her," says Caudle, "but suffered her to slumber in such assurance."

LECTURE XXXV.

MRS. CAUDLE "HAS BEEN TOLD" THAT CAUDLE HAS "TAKEN TO PLAY" AT BILLIARDS.

"You're very late to-night, dear. *It's not late?* Well, then, it isn't, that's all. Of course, a woman can never tell when it's late. You were late on Tuesday, too: a little late on the Friday before; on the Wednesday before that—now, you needn't twist about in that manner; I'm not going to say anything—no; for I see it's now no use. Once, I own, it used to fret me when you staid out; but that's all over: you've now brought me to that state, Caudle—and it's your own fault, entirely—that I don't care whether you ever come home or not. I never thought I could be brought to think so little of you; but you've done it: you've been treading on the worm for these twenty years, and it's turned at last.

"Now, I'm not going to quarrel; that's all over: I don't feel enough for you to quarrel with,—I don't, Caudle, as true as I'm in this bed. All I want of you is—any other man would speak to his wife, and not lie there like a log—all I want is this. Just tell me where you were on Tuesday? You were not at dear mother's, though you know she's not well, and you know she thinks of leaving the dear children her money; but you never had any feeling for anybody belonging to me. And you were not at your Club: no, I know that. And you were not at any theatre. *How do I know?* Ha, Mr. Caudle! I only wish I didn't know. No; you were not at any of these places; but I know well enough where you were. *Then why do I ask if I know?* That's it: just to prove what a hypocrite you are: just to show you that you can't deceive me.

"So, Mr. Caudle—you've turned billiard-player, sir. *Only*

once? That's quite enough: you might as well play a thousand times; for you're a lost man, Caudle. Only once, indeed. I wonder, if I was to say 'Only once,' what would you say to me? But, of course, a man can do no wrong in anything.

"And you're a lord of the creation, Mr. Caudle; and you can stay away from the comforts of your blessed fireside, and the society of your own wife and children—though, to be sure, you never thought anything of them—to push ivory balls about with a long stick upon a green table-cloth. What pleasure any man can take in such stuff must astonish any sensible woman. I pity you, Caudle!

"And you can go and do nothing but make 'cannons'—for that's the gibberish they talk at billiards—when there's the manly and athletic game of cribbage, as my poor grandmother used to call it, at your own hearth. You can go into a billiard-room—you, a respectable tradesman, or as you set yourself up for one, for if the world knew all, there's very little respectability in you—you can go and play billiards with a set of creatures in mustachios, when you might take a nice, quiet hand with me at home. But no! anything but cribbage with your own wife!

"Caudle, it's all over now; you've gone to destruction. I never knew a man enter a billiard-room that he wasn't lost for ever. There was my uncle Wardle; a better man never broke the bread of life: he took to billiards, and he didn't live with aunt a month afterwards. *A lucky fellow?* And that's what you call a man who leaves his wife—a 'lucky fellow?' But, to be sure, what can I expect? We shall not be together long, now: it's been some time coming, but, at last, we must separate: and the wife I've been to you!

"But I know who it is; it's that fiend, Prettyman. I *will* call him a fiend, and I'm by no means a foolish woman: you'd no more have thought of billiards than a goose, if it hadn't been for him. Now, it's no use, Caudle, your telling me that you have only been once, and that you can't hit a ball anyhow—you'll soon get over all that; and then you'll never be at home. You'll be a marked man, Caudle; yes, marked: there'll be something about you that 'll be dreadful; for if I couldn't tell a billiard-player by his looks, I've no eyes, that's all. They all of 'em look as yellow as parchment, and wear mustachios—I suppose you'll let yours grow, now; though they'll be a good deal troubled to come, I know that. Yes, they've all a yellow and sly look; just for all as if they were first-cousins to people that picked pockets. And that will be your case, Caudle: in six months, the dear children won't know their own father.

"Well, if I know myself at all, I could have borne anything but

billiards. The companions you'll find! The Captains that will be always borrowing fifty pounds of you! I tell you, Caudle, a billiard-room's a place where ruin of all sorts is made easy, I may say, to the lowest understanding,—so you can't miss it. It's a chapel of ease for the devil to preach in—don't tell me not to be eloquent: I don't know what you mean, Mr. Caudle, and I shall be just as eloquent as I like. But I never can open my lips—and it isn't often, goodness knows!—that I'm not insulted.

"No, I won't be quiet on this matter; I won't, Caudle: on any other, I wouldn't say a word—and you know it—if you didn't like it; but on this matter, I *will* speak. I know you can't play at billiards; and never could learn—I dare say not; but that makes it all the worse, for look at the money you'll lose; see the ruin you'll be brought to. It's no use your telling me you'll not play—now you can't help it. And nicely you'll be eaten up. Don't talk to me; dear aunt told me all about it. The lots of fellows that go every day into billiard-rooms to get their dinners, just as a fox sneaks into a farm-yard to look about him for a fat goose—and they'll eat you up, Caudle; I know they will.

"Billiard-balls, indeed! Well, in my time, I've been over Woolwich Arsenal—you were, something like a man then, for it was just before we were married—and then, I saw all sorts of balls; mountains of 'em, to be shot away at churches, and into people's peaceable habitations, breaking the china, and nobody knows what—I say, I've seen all these balls—well, I know I've said that before; but I choose to say it again—and there's not one of 'em, iron as they are, that could do half the mischief of a billiard-ball. That's a ball, Caudle, that's gone through many a wife's heart, to say nothing of her children. And that's a ball, that night and day you'll be destroying your family with. Don't tell me you'll not play! When once a man's given to it—as my poor aunt used to say—the devil's always tempting him with a ball, as he tempted Eve with an apple.

"I shall never think of being happy any more. No: that's quite out of the question. You'll be there every night—I know you will, better than you, so don't deny it—every night over that wicked green cloth. Green, indeed! It's red, crimson red, Caudle, if you could only properly see it—crimson red, with the hearts those balls have broken. Don't tell me not to be pathetic—I shall: as pathetic as it suits me. I suppose I may speak. However, I've done. It's all settled now. You're a billiard-player, and I'm a wretched woman."

"I did not deny either position," writes Caudle, "and for this *reason*—I wanted to sleep."

LECTURE THE LAST.

MRS. CAUDLE HAS TAKEN COLD; THE TRAGEDY OF THIN SHOES.

"I'm not going to contradict you, Caudle; you may say what you like—but I think I ought to know my own feelings better than you. I don't wish to upbraid you neither; I'm too ill for that; but it's not getting wet in thin shoes,—oh, no! it's my mind, Caudle, my mind, that's killing me. Oh, yes! gruel, indeed—you think gruel will cure a woman of anything; and you know, too, how I hate it. Gruel can't reach what I suffer; but, of course, nobody is ever ill but yourself. Well, I—I didn't mean to say that; but when you talk in that way about thin shoes, a woman says, of course what she doesn't mean; she can't help it. You've always gone on about my shoes; when I think I'm the fittest judge of what becomes me best. I dare say,—'twould be all the same to you if I put on ploughman's boots; but I'm not going to make a figure of my feet, I can tell you. I've never got cold with the shoes I've worn yet, and 'tisn't likely I should begin now.

"No, Caudle; I wouldn't wish to say anything to accuse you: no, goodness knows, I wouldn't make you uncomfortable for the world,—but the cold I've got, I got ten years ago. I have never said anything about it—but it has never left me. Yes; ten years ago the day before yesterday. *How can I recollect it?* Oh, very well: women remember things you never think of: poor souls! they've good cause to do so. Ten years ago, I was sitting up for you,—there now, I'm not going to say anything to vex you, only do let me speak: ten years ago, I was waiting for you, and I fell asleep, and the fire went out, and when I woke I found I was sitting right in the draught of the key-hole. That was my death, Caudle, though don't let that make you uneasy, love; for I don't think you meant to do it.

"Ha! it's all very well for you to call it nonsense; and to lay your ill conduct upon my shoes. That's like a man, exactly! There never was a man yet that killed his wife, who couldn't give a good reason for it. No: I don't mean to say that you've killed me: quite the reverse: still, there's never been a day that I haven't felt that key-hole. What? *Why won't I have a doctor?* What's the use of a doctor? Why should I put you to expense? Besides, I dare say you'll do very well without me, Caudle: yes, after a very little time, you won't miss me much—no man ever does.

"Peggy tells me, Miss Prettyman called to-day. *What of it?*

Nothing, of course. Yes; I know she heard I was ill, and that's why she came. A little indecent, I think, Mr. Caudle; she might wait; I sha'n't be in her way long; she may soon have the key of the caddy, now.

"Ha! Mr. Caudle, what's the use of your calling me your dearest soul now? Well, I do believe you. I dare say you do mean it; that is, I hope you do. Nevertheless, you can't expect I can lie quiet in this bed, and think of that young woman—not, indeed, that she's near so young as she gives herself out. I bear no malice towards her, Caudle,—not the least. Still, I don't think I could lay at peace in my grave if—well, I won't say anything more about her; but you know what I mean.

"I think dear mother would keep house beautifully for you, when I'm gone. Well, love, I won't talk in that way if you desire it. Still, I know I've a dreadful cold; though I won't allow it for a minute to be the shoes—certainly not. I never would wear 'em thick, and you know it, and they never gave me cold yet. No, dearest Caudle, it's ten years ago that did it; not that I'll say a syllable of the matter to hurt you. I'd die first.

"Mother, you see, knows all your little ways; and you wouldn't get another wife to study you and pet you up as I've done—a second wife never does; it isn't likely she should. And after all, we've been very happy. It hasn't been my fault, if we've ever had a word or two, for you couldn't help now and then being aggravating; nobody can help their tempers always,—especially men. Still we've been very happy, haven't we, Caudle?

"Good night. Yes,—this cold does tear me to pieces; but for all that, it isn't the shoes. God bless you, Caudle; no,—it's *not* the shoes. I won't say it's the key-hole; but again I say, it's not the shoes. God bless you once more—But never say it's the shoes."

The above significant sketch is a correct copy of a drawing from the hand of Caudle at the end of this Lecture. It can hardly, we

think, be imagined that Mrs. Caudle, during her fatal illness, never mixed admonishment with soothing as before; but such fragmentary Lectures were, doubtless, considered by her disconsolate widower as having too touching, too solemn an import to be vulgarised by type. They were, however, printed on the heart of Caudle; for he never ceased to speak of the late partner of his bed but as either "his sainted creature," or "that angel now in heaven."

POSTSCRIPT.

Our duty of editorship is closed. We hope we have honestly fulfilled the task of selection from a large mass of papers. We could have presented to the female world a Lecture for Every Night in the Year. Yes,—three hundred and sixty-five separate Lectures! We trust, however, that we have done enough. And if we have armed weak woman with even one argument in her unequal contest with that imperious creature, man—if we have awarded to a sex, as Mrs. Caudle herself was wont to declare, "put upon from the beginning," the slightest means of defence—if we have supplied a solitary text to meet any one of the manifold wrongs with which woman, in her household life, is continually pressed by her tyrannic task-master, man,—we feel that we have only paid back one grain, hardly one, of that mountain of more than gold it is our felicity to owe her.

During the progress of these Lectures, it has very often pained us, and that excessively, to hear from unthinking, inexperienced men—bachelors of course—that every woman, no matter how divinely composed, has in her ichor-flowing veins, one drop—"no bigger than a wren's eye"—of Caudle; that Eve herself may now and then have been guilty of a lecture, murmuring it balmily amongst the rose-leaves.

It may be so; still, be it our pride never to believe it. NEVER!

THE END OF MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN LECTURES.

THE

STORY OF A FEATHER.

THE

STORY OF A FEATHER.

INTRODUCTION.

I AM a native of Africa; but my parent ostrich having been hunted down for the property he carried with him, I was, many years ago, shipped at the Cape of Good Hope for London; in which magnificent city I have lived a life of many changes. In my time, I have tossed my head above the noblest of the land; and now—

But I will narrate my adventures in the order they befel me.

My duty to my parent demands that I should champion him against the supercilious sneers of the world—that I should vindicate his memory from the ignorant slander of mankind.

I will confess it, when after a race of some twenty leagues, with the horses close at my parent's tail, I beheld my honoured sire thrust his head into a bush, believing, as it was too plain he did, that because he could see nobody, nobody could see him,—I do confess, despite of filial love, I felt a fluttering of indignation, not unalloyed—may I be pardoned the sin!—with contempt. The world has taught me better wisdom. Experience has made me tolerant. Since I have seen men—praised, too, for their excelling prudence—commit the self-same folly as my unfortunate sire, reproach has subsided into sorrow, and contempt become softened by regret.

But I come of an outraged, a slandered race. What bouncing fibs have been written of me, by sand-blind philosophers, and glibly repeated by gossips of all sorts at their firesides! How venerable does a lie become by length of years! Truth is never a babe, and never a hag. As at the first, so at the last: full-blown yet young; her eyes lustrous through ages, and her lip ruddy and fresh as with the dews of Eden; upon her brow sits an eternity of beauty. Now Falsehood is born a puling, roaring

thing: its very infancy is anticipative of its old age, and stamped with the grossness of mortality. Day by day it waxes bigger and stronger; has increase of reputation, crowds of clients; until, at length, its unrighteous hoariness makes it worshipped by multitudes for no other reason save this—it has gray hairs. And so the wrinkled wizard keeps his court, and works his mischief-dealing paralysing spells, until Truth at some time turn her sapphire eyes full upon him, and as a bubble at a finger's touch, Falsehood is gone.

For thousands of years my ancestors have borne the weight of lies upon their backs. And first, for the shameless scandal that the family of ostriches wanted the love which even with the wasp makes big its parental heart towards its little ones.

"The ostrich, having laid her eggs, leaves them to be hatched by the *heat* of the sun."

Such is the wickedness that for tens of centuries has passed among men for truth, reducing the ostrich to a level with those hollow-hearted children of Adam, who leave their little ones to the mercies of the world, to the dandling of chance, to the hard rearing of the poor-house. There is Lord de Bowelless; he has a rent-roll of thousands; is a plumed and jewelled peer. Look at him in his robes;—behold "law-maker" written on the broad tablet of his comprehensive brow. He is in the House of Peers: the born protector of his fellow-man. How the consciousness of high function sublimates his nature! He looks, and speaks, and lays his hand upon his breast, the invincible champion of all human suffering—all human truth. Turn a moment from the peer, and look at yonder biped. There is an old age of cunning cut and lined in the face of a mere youth. He has counted some nineteen summers, yet is his soul wrinkled with deceit. And wherefore? Poor wretch! His very birth brought upon her who bore him abuse and infamy: his first wail was to his mother's ear the world's audible reproach. He was shuffled off into the world, a thing anyway to be forgotton, lost, got rid of. In his very babihood, he was no more to men than the young lizard that crawls upon a bank, and owes its nurture to the bounty of the elements. And so this hapless piece of human offal—this human ostrich deserted in its very shell—was hatched by wrong and accident into a thief, and there he stands, charged with the infamy of picking pockets. The world taught him nothing wise or virtuous, and now, most properly, will the world scourge him for his ignorance.

And thus, because man, and man alone, can with icy heart neglect his little ones—can leave them in the world's sandy desert to crawl into life as best they may,—because a De Bowelless can

suffer his natural baby to be swaddled in a workhouse, to eat the pap of pauper laws—to learn as it grows nothing but the readiest means of satisfying its physical instincts,—because his Lordship can let his own boy sneak, and wind, and filch through life, ending the life the father did him the deep wrong to bestow upon him, in deepest ignominy, because, forsooth, the human sire is capable of all this, he must, in the consciousness of his own depraved nature, libel the parental feelings of the affectionate ostrich! Oh, that the slander could perish and for ever! Oh, that I could pierce the lie to the heart; with a feather pierce it, though cased in the armour of forty centuries!

Again, the ostrich is libelled for his gluttony. Believe what is said of him, and you would not trust him even in the royal stables, lest he should devour the very shoes from the feet of the horses. Why, the ostrich ought to be taken as the one emblem of temperance. He lives and flourishes in the desert; his choicest food a bitter, spiky shrub, with a few stones—for how rarely can he find iron, how few the white days in which the poor ostrich can, in Arabia Petræa, have the luxury of a tenpenny nail?—to season, as with salt, his vegetable diet. And yet common councilman Prawns, with face purple as the purple grape, will call the ostrich—glutton!

For how many centuries did that stately rajah, the elephant, move about the earth, mankind all the while resolutely denying to him the natural joints of his legs? Poor fellow! although thousands and thousands of times he must have knelt before men —going upon his knees that his rider might tell the truth of him, —they nevertheless refused to him the power of bending. But the elephant has become a traveller—has condescended to eat cakes at a fair—has shown the combined humility and magnanimity of his nature, by going on his marrow-bones on the boards of a play-house, and the world has at length passed a truthful sentence upon him! At length the elephant has joints!

I have endeavoured, feebly enough I know, to vindicate the character of the maligned ostrich. Let that pass—my purpose in the following chapters is to tell what I have seen in my eventful, ever-shifting existence, as a feather, among men. An ostrich feather! Consider my mutations, and despise not my history.

CHAPTER I.

MY ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND; MY VISIT TO SHADRACH JACOBS, OF THE MINORIES.

My voyage from the Cape to the port of London I would fain pass with the fewest words. I had at least this consolation—I was an unwilling traveller. Otherwise, I had deserved all the miseries of ship-board; the darkness, the fetor, the hubbub and violence of the prison. I have some pity for anything that in its ignorance of salt-water first trusts itself to its mercies; but none for the fool that ventures twice. There may be some Eden-like spots even in a coal-mine; but the hold of a ship—ugh!

I remember being once present at a party of the Bishop of Spikenard's. The conversation turned upon the bountifulness of the sea, ordained, as it assuredly was, for the facile communication of man with man. Poor simpletons! It is my inherent faith that the ocean was expressly created to keep nations as much as possible separate; but that the courageous wickedness of man has set at nought the benevolent design of nature, and—to her astonishment—has triumphed in the very teeth of sea-sickness. Nay, have I not on my side the wisdom of law-makers? For were they not of my faith, would they tax silks and pepper? On the contrary, would they not take to their bosoms the adventurous men who are tossed to and from the far East for rare commodities to clothe the limbs, and tickle the palates of their fellow-bipeds? And what is the fact? Why, legislation, as a check to the presumption of man, makes him—in a hundred different modes—pay for his temerity. The sea was intended to keep people to themselves; but the human heart is wicked, and men became ship-builders.

Let me here advise the reader of one of my besetting faults. I am now and then apt to give up the thread of a narrative, that I may run after some butterfly thought starting up before me: however, if the reader have patience, he will find that I always return to my story. If he have not, let him at once lay down the feathery tale before him. I am conscious of this infirmity of falling into idle chit-chat. Consider, however, the prejudices of my early education. Consider the time of life at which I was taken to court—consider the society amidst which I passed my

whitest days, and you will pardon the small-talk of this my forlorn, ragged, mortified old age.

However, to begin the history of my adventures in merry England. I found myself the property of the third mate of the Jupiter, who had purchased me, with other of my companions, of a Kaffir, for a twist of pig-tail; my new master rejoicing himself exceedingly at the cultivated intellect which enabled him to trick the savage. He never, I am certain, felt so much of an Englishman, as when he had fobbed the wild man. Jack Lipscomb, for so was my new master named, combined in his nature—at least, so he thought—all the courage and daring of the sailor, with the prudence and foresight of the experienced merchant. With this belief, he had the deepest contempt of every man of every nation, save of England. He believed that the blessings of arithmetic were wholly confined to his own beloved country and her darling sons; hence, in his small traffic with Chinese, Malay, and Hottentot, he would insist that two and two made seven, five and seven fifteen or twenty, as he might feel it convenient to arrange the figures. In a word, he considered every foreigner to be produced by benevolent nature for this one purpose—to bestow profit and pleasure on a freeborn Briton. It was this consciousness of superiority that made him vote himself "honest Jack Lipscomb—a man as was above a lie, and didn't care who know'd it. He'd no deceit in him, not he: no—he never did nothing that he need hide from nobody." It was, doubtless, this fine principle that induced the ingenuous sailor to pack myself and some sixteen companions between his shirt and jacket ere he quitted the Docks. Doubtless, there was no need of such an arrangement, no other than the whim, the caprice of honest Jack Lipscomb.

On leaving the Docks, Jack took his way towards the Minories; and in a short time smote the hospitable door of an ancient Hebrew, known among his people as Shadrach Jacobs, and still more familiarly recognised by his intimates as "old Fluffy." Shadrach was a dealer in the pomps and vanities of life, turning the honest penny by such commodities, and still benevolently deploring their existence. He would employ an hour, persuading a poor wench that ear-rings of very questionable metal were of the purest ore, pocket the girl's quarter's wages for the small commercial deceit, and then sigh for the promised innocence, the pure felicity of the New Jerusalem. This was the tradesman who, for the past four voyages, had purchased the merchandise of honest, knowing Jack Lipscomb. "Vell! if it isn't Mr. Lipscomb—if I didn't dream on you last night—if I didn't dream you was come home, captain, don't never believe me, that's

all!" Such was the salutation of the Hebrew dealer, as Jack stood revealed at the door-step. "This vay, Mr. Lipscomb—this vay;" and old Fluffy fluttered down the passage, and mounted the narrow staircase, shaking at least twenty years from his heels, with the expectation of sudden gain. Jack was speedily conducted into the Jew's room, crammed and littered as it was with exotic produce. Shells, feathers, birds, bamboo-sticks, Indian hammocks, war-swords, canoe-paddles, with half-a-dozen screaming parrots and macaws, enriched the commercial sanctuary of the Hebrew.

"If I didn't dream you was captain, Mr. Lipscomb!" repeated the Jew, as Jack dropt himself upon a chair.

"Captain!" cried Jack, affecting a contempt for such vain dignity.

"Vell, then, first mate," said the Jew, as though his dream comprehended even the second rank.

"Ugh!" cried Jack, "a pretty first mate we've got—yes, a good 'un, he is—just knows a bowsprit from a umbrella, and that's all."

"Bless me! vell!" sighed the Jew, and then smiling and rubbing his hands, he turned himself towards Jack, and with an affected look of anxiety, said, "In course, Mr. Lipscomb, you comes back second?"

"I tell you what, old Fluffy," said Jack, stung by the feeling of unrewarded personal merit, "I tell you what—I'm just what I was—honest Jack Lipscomb—third mate of the Jupiter,—and I'd like you to show me a more straightforwarder, honester fellow!"

"Ha! it would do good to my eyes to see him as could," said Shadrach; and then, in a tone of sympathy, "only third-mate—vell, this is a vorld, to be sure!" Having thus delivered himself, Mr. Jacobs proceeded to the first business of his life; namely, to business itself. He had thought it merely prudent to learn the condition of his old acquaintance, whether improved or not, since they last met. This, it must be owned on the part of the Jew, was really respectful to station in the abstract; for if Mr. Lipscomb were Captain Lipscomb, Mr. Jacobs, of course, knew too well what was due to rank to offer to a commander, or even to a first or second mate, that which in the trader's own opinion was merely due to the third. "Vell, and vot have you brought us, Jack?" asked the Jew, with the old familiarity of an old friend.

"In the first place," answered the sailor, "feathers;" and he produced myself and companions.

"Feathers,—vell, I don't know," mused the Jew, "as for

feathers, Jack, they're down to nothin'. There's no vonder the world's vot it is, for feathers is quite gone out. Look at them shelves, there; look at them boxes—all full—not sold a feather this six months. I don't know vot's come to people. Some say it's edication—I don't know; if it is, it ought to be put down, for it makes the feather trade nothin'—nothin'—nothin'." Thus spoke the Jew, his voice deepening on each of the last three words, until he sounded what seemed the very bass-string of despair.

Indeed, the Jew and the sailor might have made a picture. Shadrach had, in his youth, rejoiced in luxuriant locks of more than golden: they were, in the intense signification of the phrase, red gold. These, in the storms of life, had become thickly specked with gray and white; yet remained there a departing ray among them to indicate the full glory that was past. Shadrach's face was lean and pointed; his eyes quick, and, as at times they seemed, trembling with excess of light—a light reflected as from guineas. His nose was boldly bowed, indicating the true son of Israel; and whilst the corners of his upper lip were twitched by muscular emotion—(how mysteriously is fashioned the civilised man, when there is a connexion between the seat of the pocket and the seat of the mouth!)—emotion, due homage to the spirit of gain, his under lip hung down, lapped over with the weight of sensibility, or sensuality, I will not decide. His sharp face, quick eye, faded yellow hair, and ardent complexion, gave him, to the eye of fancy, the visage of an old fox, grown venerably gray on the blood of stolen geese. And thus Shadrach sat and gazed at Jack Lipscomb.

And Jack received the looks of the Jew with the stalwart manner of a British tar, chewing the while that sweetest condiment—pigtail tobacco.

CHAPTER II.

I AM SOLD TO THE JEW.—MIRIAM THE TEMPTRESS.—THE FAMILY-WATCH.

THERE was a pause of some two or three minutes; Jack Lipscomb fully apprehending the purpose of Shadrach Jacobs, yet at the same time feeling somewhat humiliated by the consciousness of his inferiority to the Jew. How had Jack in his innermost heart crowed and triumphed at the hard bargain which had made me his property! With what profound contempt had

he contemplated the intellectual degradation of the Kaffir who sold me, tricked, cheated, as the poor savage had been, by the mixed lying and bullying of the sailor. Such had been Jack's emotions; but as he sat, and silently chewing, gazed at the Jew, he half-seemed to himself to change his condition with the barbarian he had gulled—he felt, in its fullest force, the supremacy of the Hebrew: he shrank beneath the influence of a subtler nature. Thus, Jack Lipscomb remained doggedly silent; and thus the Jew was at length compelled to be a talker.

"I tells you, Jack, feathers is nothin'. If, now, you've a little bag of gold-dust, or any nicknack of that sort—vell, you hav'n't? Vell, vell, more's the pity, Jack—more's the pity, Mr. Lipscomb."

"Then we sha'n't deal, eh?" asked Jack sulkily, and throwing a significant glance towards the door. "Well, there's Barney Aaron yet—that's one comfort."

"Vell, I didn't think it of you, Jack; to threaten me with that sarpent—that disgrace to the synagogue. Vot if feathers is a drug, do you think, Mr. Lipscomb, that I'd let you be robbed? Vy, I should think the roof would fall upon me if I let you go out of this house to be cheated."

"I don't know," said Jack, a little mollified—"perhaps you ar'n't the worst of the sharks."

"I vish I vos—yes, Mr. Lipscomb, I vish I vos," said the Jew, earnestly, "for then I shouldn't be the beggar vot I am. Ha! this is a vorld! Vell, vell, ve must take it as it is till the better one comes."

"In course," responded Jack, philosophically; and then counting my companions and myself before the Jew, he asked, "How much for the lot?"

"I don't know vot to do vith 'em," answered Shadrach, despondingly, looking down upon us and sighing deeply. "As I'm an honest man, I shall only keep 'em for the moths. Vot money have you in your pocket, Jack?"

"Something within hail of five pounds," replied the sailor.

"Vell, let me see,—vun, two, three,—yes, fourteen feathers—"

"Seventeen, you griffin," growled Jack.

"Vell, vell—I didn't see; ven you've looked upon the vickedness of the vorld as long as I have, Mr. Lipscomb, you'll have some feeling for an old man's eyes. Let me see, six—no, yes—seventeen—vell, seventeen feathers, and you've got seven pound in your pocket?"

"Four pound, fifteen shillings," said Jack, in correction.

"Now shall I tell you vot I've long thought of, Mr Lipscomb? I've often said to myself, vot a pity it vos that a

man like you, Mr. Lipscomb, didn't think more of yourself: that you didn't show the face you ought to the vorld."

"What do you mean, Mr. Jacobs?" asked Jack, very seriously.

"Vy, you see," continued the Jew, in his blandest manner smiling upon the sailor—as an epicure smiles upon a dish he purposes very pleasantly to incorporate in his system—"vy you see, vot does it go for if you're the best sailor as ever swum—the honestest, goodlookingest young man as ever von the vink of a wirtuous young voman—vot does all your goodness go for vith the vorld, if you don't vear a votch?"

Jack Lipscomb, with increasing gravity, sawed the back of his hand across his chin, and looking upon the floor, seemed as if the interrogative of the Jew had awakened a dormant feeling of vanity—had, in a moment, solved to his entire satisfaction a great social mystery. "I don't know if you arn't right," said Jack, after a pause.

"As the vorld goes—for it's made of wanity, Jack—a man's nothin' vithout a votch."

"There may be something in it," agreed the sailor.

"I'm an old man, my tear friend, and know the vorld vith all its crooked bits, and nasty blots, and I talk to you, Jack, like my own flesh and blood."

"Come, avast there!" exclaimed Jack, suddenly; "none o' that—I'm a Christian, and eats salt pork."

"To be sure, vy not?" answered the Jew, in no way disconcerted: he then returned to the charge. "I talk to you as I'd talk to my own son, and if it vos the last vords I had to speak, I'd say, Jack Lipscomb, do justice to yourself and get a votch."

"Advice is plentiful as sprats," said the sailor. "Any fool can say, get a watch; but he isn't such a fool, who shows how it's to be done."

"My tear friend," said the Jew, "vait a minute." Shadrach then unlocked a drawer, and taking from it a large, yellow, metal watch, exposed it, with a light laugh, to the sailor.

"It's a big un," said Jack Lipscomb, gravely.

"It's a beauty," exclaimed the Jew; "but you hasn't seen half, Jack, look here." Shadrach then wound up the watch, and the picture of a ship fixed in the dial-plate was set in motion, rocking very regularly over grass-green billows, under which was written the legend—"*Such is life.*"

"She carries a good deal of canvas for such a sea," said the sailor glancing at the toy with a purely professional eye.

"To be sure—vonts nothin'," answered the Jew, casting his gleaming looks in the weather-beaten face of the doomed purchaser.

"Humph! I wonder how long them studding-sail booms would stand in a trough of the sea like that? They'd snap like clay-pipes; if they wouldn't I'm—"

"Never mind, my tear friend," cried the Jew quickly, "sixpence vill paint it out. Vell, vot do you say to that, Jack?" asked Shadrach, now holding the watch to the sailor's eyes, now withdrawing it, and now turning it in his hand, as though he held a magic mirror to dazzle and confound the beholder's senses. "Vot do you say to that, Jack?"

Jack spoke to the Jew's understanding a whole volume; albeit he really uttered not a word. For he slowly wiped his lips with the cuff of his jacket, the while he gazed at the chronometer; again he wiped away, what to the Jew seemed the water rising to the sailor's mouth, brought thither by strong desire of making that watch his own.

"For six pound with them feathers," and here the Jew threw an affected look of contempt upon myself and companions prostrate at his feet—"the votch shall be yourn."

"Is it gold?" asked Jack.

"Vot! vell!" exclaimed the Jew, and he advanced two indignant steps towards the drawer, as if about to consign the watch for ever to its keeping—then paused, and looking sorrowfully up into the face of Jack Lipscomb, asked him, in most pathetic tones, "vot he thought of him?"

"No offence, I hope," said Jack Lipscomb, deferentially.

"As if I'd sell my best friend anything but the best gold. Ha! Mr. Lipscomb, you don't know me—no, you don't; you've cut me clean to the heart; but to show you I bears no malice, I'll take all the money you have for the votch—"

"Without the feathers?" asked the sailor.

"No, my tear friend, with the feathers; though they're of no use to me—quite none: still, for principle, my tear friend, I must have the feathers."

Jack turned his tobacco in his mouth, looked at the watch, as the cameleon fixes a fly, ere with its long thread of a tongue he consigns it to its jaws,—then, throwing forth his right hand, seized the timepiece, almost immediately emptying his pocket of four pounds, fifteen shillings.

"You've a bargain, Mr. Lipscomb—you've a—vell, bless my heart, don't go,"—said the Jew, as the knocker smote the street-door—"it's only an old acquaintance of yourn, my daughter Miriam."

Saying this the Jew quitted the chamber, and in two minutes from his departure, Miriam, a more than plump Jewess, with vast black eyes, a profusion of black hair (a very net for sailor's

hearts), large rosy lips, showing every one of her brilliant white teeth, and her massive face polished over with smiles, swam into the room.

Poor Jack Lipscomb!

This may be a proper place to observe that a sentimental affection had, for the duration of three past voyages, grown up between Jack Lipscomb and Miriam Jacobs. If, however, it was not strictly between them, 'twas all the same—Jack thought it was. There was, unfortunately, what at first promised to be an inseparable bar to the happiness of matrimony—namely, the religion of Miriam; Jack sticking for it, most lustily, that his wife must be like himself, every inch a Christian.

"Ha! Miriam, what a pity it is you're a Jew!" This was wont to be the frequent complaint of the orthodox Jack; and at length Miriam, worked upon by her lover's affection—for sure we are his many presents had nothing to do with it—promised, after a fair exercise of thought on the subject, to give up the synagogue.

Miriam Jacobs and Jack Lipscomb are together. Shall I betray the language of lovers? I will not. I will content myself, and I trust, the reader too, by stating that Miriam (having seen the watch) promised to become a Christian wife in a week's time; in token of which promise, she received the said watch as a gift of her expectant husband.

Jack Lipscomb, nothing the better for the alcohol sold in the Minories, quitted the house of Jacobs penniless, leaving me and my companions—whom he had all but stolen from a barbarian, only to be tricked in his turn—the property of the Jew.

As Jack reeled his way towards his ship, Miriam, consigning her jetty locks to the close imprisonment of paper, glanced at the rocking ship on the watch, and for a moment ceasing to hum a tune, read—"*Such is life.*"

CHAPTER III.

FLAMINGO, THE COURT FEATHER-MERCHANT.—THE DUKE'S PINE-APPLE.—BIRTH OF A PRINCE OF WALES.

My next remove was far westward. I became the property of the feather-merchant to the court; or, as the tradesman himself delighted to blazon in gold letters over his shop-door, "Plumassier to their Majesties." I confess I felt myself somewhat humiliated by the ill-report of Mr. Flamingo, who, in his dealing with

Miriam Jacobs—on this occasion ambassadress from her sire in the Minories—protested that I was the inferior article of the whole lot; and that no pains of cleaning and dressing would ever enable me to return sixpence to my purchaser. This melancholy feeling, however, gave place to better hopes, when, on the departure of the Jewess—(Miriam had been compelled by the hard chaffering of the feather-merchant to throw a green monkey into the bargain, for the especial delectation of the youngest Miss Flamingo)—my new master selected me from my companions, and, shaking me tenderly, asked the wife of his bosom, "if I wasn't a perfect beauty?" This pleasing flattery was, moreover, adequately responded to by Mrs. Flamingo, who, with glistening eyes, declared me "quite a love."

I have already said, Mr. Flamingo was feather-seller to the court of Great Britain. He felt, intensely felt, the surpassing importance of his position. His very soul seemed plumed with the dignity. Hence, like my parent ostrich, he would, when full of the consciousness of his greatness, scarcely tread the shop-floor, but, raised upon the wings, or winglets, of his self-conceit, half-fly, half-walk. It was the religion of Peter Flamingo, that the whole moral and social condition of man depended solely upon feathers. Nay, I believe it to have been his inner creed that plumes were not so much designed for kings and nobles, as that potentates and peers were especially sent into this world for plumes. I say, inner creed; because my experience of mankind has convinced me that there are some people who have an outside faith covering a faith, in the same way that jugglers have a box within a box, the last in its small sanctuary generally containing the conjured shilling. When Peter Flamingo read or heard of the possible perfectibility of man, I am certain that man appeared to him like a Poland cock, with a natural crest of feathers. With this faith, it was consequent that Mr. Flamingo should pay profoundest reverence to those privileged to wear the artificial glory, such reverence being at the prime cost of those to whom fate had rigorously denied that proud advantage. Hence, the reader can imagine the separate places of the Marchioness of Mannaville, born to the right of a plumed coronet, and of Patty Butler, also born to the duty of dressing feathers—can conceive their separate conditions in the mind of Mr. Flamingo. The Marchioness was a creature apart, a glory to be numbered with the stars of heaven; the feather-dresser, a mere weed of earth, millions of miles away from that starry presence. Therefore, like a good penny-turning Chaldean, Flamingo thought, to properly worship the star, he *must* tread upon the weed.

Mr. Flamingo, in the observance of this faith, did at times

forget the mere naked meaning of words, substituting another set of syllables for the only set rightly called for by the occasion. In home-spun phrase, Flamingo was a liar: but then his lies, since I must call them so, were used to the very best advantage. He dressed himself in falsehood, but then he looked all the better for it. He made positive gold-leaf of his untruths, which cast a lustre on him, covered, as he would still be covered, with borrowed radiance. Being feather-seller to the court, he was, of course, intimate with the whole peerage. He would, at a moment, cast you up the number of dimples to be found in the cheeks and chins of Countesses—would minutely describe to you the hangings and furniture of every best bedroom of every nobleman's mansion in the kingdom; he, in the course of his glorifying profession, having been an honoured guest thereat. With him true friendship was a flower that was only to be plucked from the gardens of the nobility; and this flower Flamingo was for ever twisting between his lips, or sporting in his button-hole. "My friend, the Marquis,"—"My most excellent friend, the Duke,"—"My worthy acquaintance, the Baronet." Thus continually spoke Flamingo; and so speaking, he thought he let fall diamonds and rubies from his tongue for the world to wonder at.

A man with so many, and with such friends, had of course frequent evidences that friendship was not what the poetic cynic calls it, only "a name." By no means; to Flamingo, it was sometimes a turbot—sometimes a turkey. His friend the Marquis would now and then appear upon the feather-dresser's table in the not less attractive, because twin shape of a brace of pheasants: his most excellent friend the Duke has smoked upon the board, in the solid beauty of a haunch of venison. Of all men in the world, Flamingo would have been the last to deprive the peerage of their proxies. More: how often did some exalted Dowager appear in a rich and candied preserve—how often some Earl's daughter, the last out of the season, sent a basket of peaches, ripe and tempting as her own lips? At least, if these gifts were really not made by the exalted people praised by Flamingo for their generosity, it was not the fault of the feather-dresser; no, the more his virtue to preach up the necessity of liberality to the world, even by apocryphal examples of beneficence.

It was some time after I had passed from the hands of the feather-merchant, that I heard a story illustrative of this, his theoretical virtue. As, however, I may not find a fitter place than the present for the story, I will here narrate it; the more especially as the occurrence took place whilst I was yet Flamingo's property, albeit then ignorant of the history I have to speak of.

Peter Flamingo gave a dinner. I should say he rather presided at a dinner given to him; for there was no dish upon the table that might not have borne above it the banner of the noble house from whence it emanated. Believe Flamingo, and the banquet was no other than a collection of offerings made to him by the English nobility: he could have pointed out the representatives of the peerage, from the noble who came to cut throats with William the Conqueror at Hastings, to the last baron ennobled for selling the throats of his constituents at Westminster. How Flamingo's guests—benevolently picked out by him from the very mob of tradesmen—wondered at the banquet; how they praised their host for his high connexions, and how they hated him!

The dinner passed off with excessive cordiality. The wine, every drop of it from the cellars of the peerage, made a passing call at the hearts of the drinkers, ere it mounted into their heads; and all was sincerity and noisy happiness.

The dessert appears. Were there ever seen such magnificent pine-apples? Flamingo drops his eye proudly yet lovingly upon the fruit, and says, with a soft voice, so modulated that not one man shall lose one syllable—"Ha! my dear Duke of Landsend—he is indeed a friend; all—all from his own gracious pinery."

"Bless my heart! Well, you are a lucky man!" cries Brown.

"Was there ever such a duke in the world?" exclaims Johnson.

"It's a shame to put a knife into 'em;" remarks Field, directing his looks, sharpened to a very keen edge, towards the crown of the ducal gift.

"Pooh! pooh! what are pines grown for, if not to be eaten?" cries Flamingo handling his knife, looking full at the pines, but only looking at them.

"Don't cut the duke's gift—it's a shame! I wouldn't touch a bit of it," says Robinson; "but there's a couple of little ones there, that—"

"Well, if you prefer them—they're not so large; but their flavour is delicious! They were sent by—yes, I think by him—by Sir Harry Bargate, a baronet of the last batch: will you venture?" And without waiting for a reply, Flamingo cuts into very, very small pieces the smallest pine.

And still all proceeds with increasing felicity. The bottle goes round and round, and at length the heads of the drinkers begin obediently to follow it. The laugh increases—the shout swells—and all is boisterous merriment.

Brown jumps to his legs. "It's no use," he cries; "I've fought against it long enough: I must have a cut at the Duke." So saying, Brown seizes the largest pine, and with furious preci-

pitancy, strikes his knife into it; Flamingo's blood running cold to his very toes.

"And so must I!" cries the no less drunken Johnson, following Brown's example.

"And I!" screams Field; and the third knife enters the Duke's third pine.

"And I, too," shouts Robinson, rising to commit execution; but Flamingo, restored by the third attack to something like consciousness, snatches up the pine, and Robinson, missing his mark, falls sprawling on the table.

The charm of the night is broken; Flamingo looks sulky: and the guests, a little sobered by a sense of their attack upon the Duke's gifts, depart.

"We were wrong," says Brown, "to demolish those pines; for, if Flamingo had had to buy 'em what would they have cost?"

"I wonder what's the market-price now?" says Johnson—"let's ask." And as he spoke, he turned into a celebrated fruiterer's. "What's the price of those pines?"

"Three guineas each, sir," answered the tradesman.

"They're very small," said Johnson. "Have you none bigger?"

"Yes, four—very large; five guineas each. But I can't show them now; for the fact is, they're out on hire for a night to my neighbour, Mr. Flamingo."

And so, the Duke of Landsend was the shopkeeper; and so Flamingo paid fifteen guineas (he saved one pine) for a lie, certainly, if there be any means of testing the value of lies, not worth half the money.

This little banquet took place on the 11th of August, 1762. With much melancholy did Peter Flamingo rise on the 12th. His bile, however, was blown away by the Park guns, for they announced the birth of Queen Charlotte's first-born—the Prince of Wales.

The "rudiments of an angel"* were begun in George the Fourth. Did Peter Flamingo rejoice at the birth of a Prince of Wales? I think so; but certain I am his heart rejoiced at the fine prospect for feathers.

* In *The Yorkshireman* of Jan. 14, 1843, is the report of a meeting of "The Stockton Mechanics' Institute," William Bayley, Esq., in the chair. The Chairman, in introducing the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal, said—"Reverence in the son the future man, and in the prince the future king. Destroy not in either royal scion *the rudiments of an angel.*"

CHAPTER IV.

PATTY BUTLER, THE FEATHER-DRESSER.—PATTY'S MOTHER.—MR. LINTLEY, THE APOTHECARY.

THE week that followed the 12th of August, 1762, was a time of jubilee for rejoicing, thoughtful England. A Prince of Wales was born; and as I heard, numberless patriotic sages had, at public dinners, already prophesied in him another Alfred. In his time all the virtues would walk the highways, dropping flowers in the every-day paths of mortals, and rejoicing plenty unloose her golden sheaves for the no more repining poor. The sky would wear a purer azure—the gladdening sun once more beam with the sanctifying light it cast on Eden—the whole earth lie nearer Paradise, and once more

"—— angels talk familiarly with men,"

as men were wont to talk with one another. The Prince—it was predicted from the tables of a thousand taverns—would be the paragon of mortals; in his own great acts indicating to the highest the divine origin and end of man, and showing the folly, the littleness, of all human malice, and all human selfishness. George the Fourth yet slept in his cradle, when the spirit of prophecy thus walked abroad, and played the sweetest notes upon its silver trumpet; and tailors and gold lacemen felt a strange, mysterious gladness—a lightening of the heart and pleasant spasm of the pocket.

Patty Butler dwelt in a long, dark lane, on the north side of the Strand; in one of those noisome, pestilent retreats abutting on, yet hidden by, the wealth and splendour of the metropolis: one of the thousand social blotches covered by the magnificent trappings of London. Even to this place did the birth of the Prince of Wales bring gladness: for Patty Butler smiled, as dreaming grief might smile in an angel, as Luke Knuckle, Mr. Flamingo's light-porter, somewhat suddenly stood before her.

"Hush!" said Patty, advancing to him, with upraised finger.

"How's mother?" asked Luke, with a quiet earnestness.

"Better—better, Luke, and asleep. Have you brought work?" inquired the girl with trembling voice, and the tears almost in *her eyes.*

"Hav'n't you heard the news?" asked Flamingo's porter.

"What news should I hear in this place?" said Patty.

"Why, to be sure, you might as well be clean out of the world. Not to have heard all about it! Well, I wouldn't ha' believed it! Can't you guess?" Patty, with a wan smile shook her head. "Well then," said Luke, "not to tease you any longer—for God help you! poor babe, you've enough trouble for any six—what do you think?—there's a Prince of Wales born."

"Indeed?" said Patty, unmoved by the blissful intelligence.

"Why, where could you ha' been not to have heard the bells ringing, and the guns—to be sure, this isn't much of a place for merry bells to be heard in at all—but where could you ha' been?"

"Where could I have been—where could I go?" said Patty a little impatiently—and then forcing a smile to her fading lips, she asked—"and what, Luke, can a Prince matter to folks like us?"

"Well!—why you used to be a quick girl—don't you see, the Prince of Wales as is come will make the fortin' of feathers? It's what they call one of his royal prerogatives—though, for myself, I can't say I know what they quite are. I know this much, though; old Flamingo's all upon the wing agin. There's work for three months certain," added Luke.

Patty clasped her hands in thankfulness.

"Master said you must come to the shop and work, or go without it; but I talked to missus—ha! she'd ha' been a nicer woman after all, if luck hadn't given her such good board and lodging,—I told her how ill your mother was—how you'd starve beside her, but wouldn't leave her; so I got her to abuse master into a bit of goodness, and so that you mayn't leave mother, I've brought the work to you." Here the honest porter displayed myself and others to Patty Butler.

"You are always so good-natured, Luke," cried Patty.

"I don't know about that," said Knuckle; but after all, it seems to me so easy to be good-natured, I wonder anybody takes the trouble to be anything else. Good bye, Patty: I say, the work must be done directly—for master says he don't know when it won't be wanted."

"I won't stir, Luke, till I've finished it, that you may be sure of," said Patty, with new cheerfulness; and wishing her a cordial farewell, and speedy health to her mother, Luke Knuckle—the light-porter to Flamingo, the court feather-merchant—descended the dark narrow staircase with the feeling of the finest gentleman; for he trod gently, anxiously, lest he should wake the sleeping sick.

Released from the case, I could now look about me. I am sure I felt a thrill of pain as the place broke upon me. An

August sun struggled through a narrow lattice, as though stained and tainted by the gloom it had to pierce; dimly showing the space of the apartment, a space not encumbered by useless furniture. In a recess, a nook of the room, was a bed: and I could hear the hard breathing of a sleeper—but only hear; for a curtain of surprising whiteness hung between us. Indeed, every object was wonderfully clean, and displayed itself in contrast to the meanness of the material. All was penury, but penury in housewife attire.

Patty Butler took me from my other companions, looking earnestly at me. I have seen eyes exulting under coronets; have felt throughout my frame the magic breath of beauty, born with all earth's pleasures for its handmaids; have waved above and touched the velvet cheek of lady greatness: yet have I never felt such deep emotion as when gazed upon by the poor feather-dresser—the girl of fifteen years—the drudge of a garret in a pestilent and fever-breathing alley.

Patty would never have been beautiful; born in down, and fed upon the world's honey-dew, she would have passed for nothing handsome; but she had in her countenance that kind of plainness, to my mind, better than any beauty heaven has yet fashioned. Her sweet, gentle, thin face trembled with sensibility—with sensibility that sent its riches to her eyes, glittering for a moment there, beyond all worth of diamonds. I have said, she was really but fifteen; she would have passed for twenty. From earliest childhood, she was made to read the hardest words—want, poverty—in the iron book of daily life; and the early teaching had given to her face a look of years beyond her age. With her, daily misery had anticipated time.

And she sits, in that almost empty garret, a lovely sacred thing—a creature that redeems the evils and the wrongs of earth; and in her quiet suffering—in her devotion, constant to her heart as her heart's blood—gives best assurance of a future heaven. She sits, glorified by patient poverty—by the sustaining meekness of her soul, by the unconquerable strength of her affections. Beautiful are queens on thrones—but is there not a beauty (eternal as the beauty of the stars!) in placid want, smiling with angel looks, and gathering holiest power, even from the misery that consumes it?

For two nights, Patty scarcely took one constant hour's repose. Still she worked; her labour only intermitted by her frequent visits to the bed-side where lay her sick mother. I have seen the feet of the best opera-dancers; heard them praised for their life, ay, for their intelligence—their sentiment. Yet have I seen nothing like Patty Butler's foot, touching the garret floor from

her chair to the bed-side; so gentle, so affectionate, so noiseless, lest she should wake her mother.

Each day, the doctor—not the parish doctor — came. A neighbour had told him of the sick woman; and he had accidentally seen the gentle Patty. Mr. Lintley was a poor apothecary. It was at times a hard struggle for him not to tell the man who called for the taxes,—to call again. He had no hope of a shilling from Mrs. Butler, even could his skill restore her; but more—he knew the seal of death was on her; consumption—Patty knew it not—withered her.

The third day I passed in the garret, the doctor paid his morning visit. Patty had been up all night: that night she had wept—bitterly wept—had risen every five minutes to hover about her mother, who would still assure her she was better—much better.

Mr. Lintley, the apothecary, entered the garret. What chaplets are woven for men of slaughter! What statues erected to men-slaying conquerors! What notes of glory sounded—what blaspheming praises to the genius of blood-shedding! I have seen much of the ceremonies dedicated to these things, and contrasting my late feelings with my present, with what new homage do I venerate the race of Lintleys—the men who, like minor deities, walk the earth—and in the homes of poverty, where sickness falls with doubly heavy hand, fight the disease beside the poor man's bed, their only fee the blessing of the poor! Mars may have his planet, but give me what—in the spirit of the old mythology might be made a star in heaven—the night-lamp of apothecary Lintley.

"And how—how is your mother?" asked the apothecary, shown into the room by Patty, who, with me in her hand, had risen to open the door.

"She is better, sir," said Patty—"better and asleep."

The apothecary looked with a mild sadness on the girl, and drew aside the curtain. Her mother was dead.

In tears and agony and numbness of heart, and death about me, I was prepared—"drest" for—

But of that in another chapter.

CHAPTER V.

PATTY BUTLER FINISHES HER WORK.—A WORD ON LONDON GARRETS.—A RUFFIAN.—PATTY IN THE WATCH-HOUSE.

PATTY'S loss of her mother was quickly known; and as quickly was the chamber of death filled with poor neighbours—the needy, suffering, squalid, ay, and even vicious denizens of that miserable, fetid alley. Touched by sympathy, in the very fulness of heart, utter destitution proffered service and assistance to the motherless girl—when its only aid was a comforting look; its only means, the starting tear: nature, forgetful of its worldly destitution, spoke only from the abundance of its pity. Old, care-lined faces—with the ugliness of habitual want sharpening and deforming them—looked kind and gentle, for the time refined and humanised by the awakened spirit of human love. These pressed about the sufferer, and with trite words of comfort—with old and common phrases of compassion—(the best rhetoric the talkers had to offer)—tried to soothe the stricken girl. "God help her!" cried an old crone, with melting looks, though with the features of a sybil. "God *will* help her!" cried a young creature, sobbing, whilst the tears ran down her cheeks, washing from them the branding rouge that *set apart* the speaker. So earnest was the voice that Patty raised her head from her hands, and her eyes meeting the eyes of her girl neighbour—of the poor, reckless thing, often so heedless and laughing in her very despair; of her, who a hundred times when passing in the lane, by venom words and brassy looks, had taunted and out-stared the simple, gentle feather-dresser—Patty felt a communion of heart in the deep sincerity of that assurance of God's help, and through her tears smiled dimly, yet thankfully, affectionately on her comforter. The blighted girl, thus recognised, was about to seize Patty to her arms with the folding of a sister: she then shrunk back as at a ghost, and, as though poison had suddenly shot through all her veins, trembled from head to foot, whilst the paleness of death rose beneath the paint, in ghastly contrast of mortality and shame. With a half-suppressed moan, the girl darted down stairs, and rushed to *her* only place of refuge—the horrid street.

Happily, the kindness of Mr. Lintley, the apothecary, rendered the assistance of the neighbours—could they have offered any beyond the kindness of mere words—needless. Lintley was doomed to, perhaps, the most penal condition of poverty; that is,

to an outside show of comfort, with that gnawing, snapping fox. penury, eating to the bowels within; was one of the thousand grown-up Spartans who, with aching hearts and over-jaded faculties, turn a shining outside look on London streets. Nevertheless, Lintley determined that Patty's mother should not go to the earth in workhouse deals; for though his philosophy smiled at the vanities of the undertaker, it had still, in its very elevation, the better part of philosophy, a benign and charitable consideration for the weakness, the prejudice, yea, for the folly of others. Thus, all things necessary for that last scene of life—in which the man, though dead, still plays a part—were duly ordered at the charge of Mr. Lintley, and—how few the hours!—Patty sat and worked beside her coffined mother.

"Now, child—do come down stairs—do, now: you'll be comfortable there," urged an old woman, a lodger, to Patty, seeking to win her from the place of death.

"Thank you, I am better here—happier—indeed I am," said Patty, with sweetest meekness.

"Well, but it's getting late and dark," said the woman, "and ain't you afraid?"

"Afraid! Of what should I be afraid?" asked the girl.

"Well, to be sure, for a young thing you've a bold heart, but when I was a girl, I could have no more stayed alone with anybody dead—"

"Not if you loved them?" interrupted Patty.

"Why, love's something, to be sure; but still death, my dear, you know—"

"Takes fear from love, and as I feel it, makes love stronger. I loved her when she was here, and must I not love her—still more love her—now she is an angel? I tell you, it comforts me to be alone—it does indeed," said Patty.

"Well, to be sure! if ever! who could have thought!" and the old woman would have proceeded in her exclamations.

"But if you'll be kind enough to stay here till I come back from Mr. Flamingo—"

"To be sure; Mrs. Shroudly and me will stay," said the woman.

"You will so serve me! In half-an-hour I shall have finished my work; I shall soon be back."

"And you'll sleep here alone in this room to-night?" asked the visitor.

For a moment Patty could not speak: then, with a torrent of tears, and a voice of anguish, she answered—"It is the last, it is the last!"

The well-meaning neighbour left the room, and by the last

light of a golden August evening, Patty completed her task. Her work was done; and the room darkened, darkened about her. She sat fearless, self-sustained in the gloom; her thoughts made solemn and strengthened by the atmosphere of death which fell upon her spirit. She felt as in a holy presence. That poor, weak, ignorant creature—in the exaltation of her soul, communed with her mother in the skies; talked, wept, prayed to her, and was comforted. And for that which lay apart—for that mute, dull semblance of the thing that was—it was for a time forgotten in the rapturous grief that sorrowed at its loss. Thus passed the girl an hour of darkness, made bright by spiritual dreams; and then, calm and sustained, she prepared to venture in the roaring street.

Unseen, unknown, are the divinities that—descending from garrets—tread the loud, foul, sordid, crowding highways of London. Spiritual presences, suffering all things, and in the injustice—most hard to turn to right—of our social purpose, living and smiling, daily martyrs to their creed of good. Young children, widowed age, and withered singleness—the ardent student, flushed and fed with little else but hope—the disappointed, yet brave, good old man, a long, long loser in the worldly fight, who has retired apart, to bleed unseen, and uncomplaining die—the poor and stern man, only stern in truth—sour of speech, with heart of honied sweetness,—all of these, in all their thousand shades of character and spirit—the army of martyrs to fortune, and the social iniquities that, drest and spangled for truths, man passes off on man—all of this bright band have, and *do*, and will consecrate the garrets of London, and make a holy thing of poverty by the sacrificial spirit with which they glorify her. Many of these are to be known—but more escape the searching eyes of the quickest moral vision. There is a something—a look of service in the aspect of some; a depression that elevates, a dogged air of courage that speaks the fighting man in poverty's battalions—an honourable, undisguised threadbareness that marks the old campaigner! Are not his darns more beautiful than best work of Sidonian needles—is there a patch about him that is not, duly assayed, true cloth of gold? And has not such poverty its genii, its attending spirits? Yes; a bloodless glory is its body-guard, and its tatter-bearer an angel.

And does not some such presence walk with Patty Butler down the Strand, on to the house of Peter Flamingo, feather-merchant to the Court? Stay: who is it, that now addresses her?

There is a tall creature hanging about her steps—now, shifting

to the right side, now the left; now behind and now before. And now he inclines himself, and says something to the ear of Patty, who—with her thoughts in that room of misery and desolation—cannot heed him, but with her heart in her throat, walks quicker and quicker, silent and choking.

"If you hav'n't a tongue, I'll see if you've lips," exclaimed, —not the good angel of Patty Butler,—and the speaker threw his arms about the girl, who shrieked with misery and terror. Ere, however, the sound had died upon his ear, the ruffian had measured his length upon King George the Third's highway.

Luke Knuckle, Mr. Flamingo's porter, had been sent to Patty to hurry her with her work. Arriving at the house but two or three minutes after her departure, he had followed closely on her steps, and was thus in a most advantageous situation for the proper application of his fist, at a most dramatic point of time.

"Watch! watch!" roared the fellow, still upon his back; for with evidently a quick sense of the magnanimity of Britons, he felt the only means of escaping a second blow was to use nothing but his lungs.

"What's the matter?" asked a watchman, who miraculously happened to be near the spot.

"I'm robbed," was the answer.

"Robbed!" and the watchman whirled his rattle.

"Robbed," was the lie repeated; "and I desire you to take to the watch-house that pickpocket"—and the speaker pointed to Knuckle—"and that—" but the word was lost in the noise of a newly sprung rattle.

The watchmen gathered together, and Patty Butler, with her honest champion, was taken to the watch-house of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

CHAPTER VI.

PATTY BUTLER IN THE WATCH-HOUSE.—THE CHARGE.—HER RELEASE.

"WHAT's the charge?" asked Mr. Naplightly, night-constable of the parish of St. Martin-in-the Fields.

"Picking pockets," replied one of the watchmen, trippingly.

"Ha! I see—yes, an old friend, eh, watchman?" said Naplightly, looking with terrible significance at the little feather-dresser, pale, trembling, and dumbfounded by the suddenness of the event that had placed her in the foul, dim dungeon, where

justice, for a time laying aside a half-smoked pipe, was to decide upon the accusation.

"You know this young lady, of course?" asked the constable.

"Bless your heart, sir,—know her! Do I know my own rattle? The most troublesome and abusingest girl on my beat," answered the watchman.

"That's plain enough—plain with half an eye. Now, sir, if you please"—and the night-constable looked towards the tall man, the assailant of Patty. "Now, sir, everything according to business. What's your name?"

"Julius Curlwell," answered the ruffian, looking loftily around him, as though very proud of his name, and pulling up his manifold white neckcloth, as if still prouder of the cambric.

"And where do you live, and what are you?" asked the functionary.

"I at present reside," answered Mr. Curlwell, with monosyllabic majesty, "with my friend, my lord Huntingtopper."

The face of the night-constable—before arched with dignity—relaxed into a courteous smirk, and he felt his voice grow mellow in his throat: the watchmen too drew themselves up, glancing respectfully at Lord Huntingtopper's friend, who, doubtless, unconscious of the impression he had made, jerked with languid, lackadaisical air his heavy gold chain and seals between his right thumb and finger.

"And you charge this young girl, Mr. Curlwell, with picking your pocket?—you—"

Here the constable was interrupted, as he called it, by Patty; for she fell in a heap upon the watch-house floor, as though stabbed to the heart. In an instant, Knuckle raised her in his arms, and removing her bonnet, the yellow light of a flaring lamp fell upon her death-pale, innocent face; and a tear rolled down her white cheek on the rough hand of Luke, who, as though molten lead had dropt upon his flesh, started round, and with a look of pain and passion glared now at the constable, and now at Mr. Julius Curlwell. "You stony-hearted vipers," cried Luke at last,—"will you let the poor girl die—will none of you get some water?"

"Yes, it's all right," muttered one watchman, leering and laughing, "when the evidence is strong, they always tries a faint."

Worn out, exhausted by the anguish of the previous days.—oppressed with that feeling of desolation which makes the world far worse than valueless,—terrified, astounded by her situation—Patty had remained in a half-stupor—her mind and senses numbed by the apathy of misery. The words of the constable

for a moment called her back to consciousness, and then she sank beneath the torture.

"There—she'll do, with a little water," jested one of the watchmen, as Luke sprinkled Patty's face—"and if she won't I'm sorry for her; seeing as the parish finds no hartshorn. I told you she'd do," repeated the fellow, as Patty unclosed her eyes, and, breathing heavily, looked mournfully about her.

"Oh, Luke!" she exclaimed at length, bursting into tears, as the implied accusation of the constable flashed upon her. "Oh, Luke!"

"Silence!" cried the night-officer, knitting his brows; and then turning to the injured man—Lord Huntingtopper's friend—he broke into a grim smile, saying, "Now, sir, if you please? Come to the robbery." Again Patty moaned, and again the night-constable roared "Silence!"

"I—I—I can't precisely make a—a what you call—a criminal charge against that young woman in particular—no, understand me—not in particular—certainly not—nevertheless, I have been robbed—a very handsome family snuff-box—robbed and knocked down—or knocked down and robbed; for understand me, I wish to be exact; a very handsome, gold-mounted, tortoiseshell box—couldn't go without fingers—with family crest—dolphin with tail in his mouth, Latin under it, and everything proper." Such was what Mr. Julius Curlwell evidently considered to be his charge.

The night-constable indulged in a heavy shake of the head, and glancing at Patty, observed, "If things of this sort isn't put down by the strong hand, there's an end of respectability. I think there's evidence enough to lock the girl up till the morning."

"Oh, for the love of mercy!" shrieked Patty; and then, convulsed and heart-stricken, she could speak no more; but held forth her clasped hands to the night-constable.

"Stop—stop!" cried the officer, as Luke was about to speak; "let us do everything in order; first search the girl; the property may be about her." Patty looked entreatingly at the constable, who waved his hand as though his public virtue were proof against looks. She then turned with streaming eyes to Mr. Curlwell, who, with a slight cough, and averting his face from the glance of the accused, somewhat hurriedly drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and with considerable energy, blew his nose.

"But to begin with——watchman, what's that?" asked the constable, pointing to the case, where reposed myself and companions: "what's that?"

"My work, sir—it is, indeed; I was going to take it home," said Patty, "when that gentleman"—her voice faltered—"when that gentleman—Oh, God help me!"—she could say no more.

"Ha!" and the night-constable breathed hard, sucked his underlip, and then said, speaking as an oracle—"The thing looks very black agin her. Watchman," and he raised his voice, "what's in that case?"

Immediately the watchman drew me from my companions, and with a look of admiration that ought to have pleased me, cried, "Well! what a bit o' snow!"

"Young woman," said the night-constable—he also smitten with my beauty; "Young woman, I do hope these things are honestly come by; I say, I do, as a father, hope it," he repeated, with a manner that proved he had no hope whatever on the subject.

"Honestly come by—to be sure they are—as I'd show you in five minutes if I was only out of this dog-hole," cried Luke.

"By the bye," said the night-constable, at length really awakened to the presence of Knuckle—"what is the charge against this man? What is your charge, sir?"

I cannot exactly say what it was that prompted the answer to Mr. Julius Curlwell, but that person having placed his hand in his coat side-pocket, raised his eyelids with a slight motion of astonishment, and replied in the softest voice—"Charge! none whatever."

"I thought you was knocked down, sir, and"—

"Unquestionably; but I wish to be particular, and—no, I wouldn't make a mistake for the world—and I—that is, against the man—I have no charge whatever."

"You may go," said the night-constable, adding, with a leer, "and you may thank this noble gentleman for his good-nature."

Luke evidently deemed such politeness unnecessary, for taking no notice of Curlwell, and saying in a hurried whisper to Patty, "Just you wait a minute," he impatiently made his way from the watch-house.

"Upon second thoughts," said Mr. Curlwell, "I do think, Mr. Night-Constable, you had better let the girl go too; she may amend—she may reform—and for my part, I pardon her—I do, indeed; so, you 'd better let her go."

Mr. Naplightly, the constable, certainly felt desirous of entertaining the humane idea suggested by Mr. Julius Curlwell, but as that philanthropist did not back his arguments by other reasons, very current in the good old days or nights of the good old roundhouse, Mr. Naplightly relapsed into official virtue, and *said he* would certainly lock the girl up till the morrow morning.

Here Patty entreated the constable to wait the return of Luke; he would be back immediately. Mr. Curlwell also joined in the request, adding that as the night was very hot, and the watch-house not particularly well ventilated, he would wait outside until he saw better reason either to forego or press his charge. Here Mr. Curlwell slipt a crown into the hand of a watchman, and the lock of the door was turned, Mr. Curlwell sagaciously observing, as he stepped into the moonlight, that "there was nothing so sweet as fresh air."

And yet there was another sweetness which Mr. Curlwell lost no time ere he enjoyed; for he drew from his side-pocket the tortoiseshell gold-mounted snuff-box—the box, bearing the dolphin with its tail in its mouth, the Latin under it, and everything proper—the box he had deemed lost in the mob that had gathered round him on his prostration; but which happily he had found whilst in the watch-house, though being on certain occasions what is called a close man, he did not then make known the discovery.

To return to Patty in the watch-house. She is not thrust into the den in which half-a-dozen wretched creatures have been screaming and shouting, but is permitted a seat among the watchmen, who, leaving his Majesty's subjects to the influence of their own impulses, good or bad, sit at the hearth and drink porter, the while they admire myself and fellows.

"I say, Barney," cries an old guardian, sticking me in his greasy hatband, and straddling about the floor; "here's a thing to go a courtin' in!"

The shout excited by this magic touch of humour was checked by violent knocking at the watch-house door. It was no sooner opened, than Luke Knuckle, Mr. Flamingo the feather-merchant, and—though not too willingly—Mr. Curlwell, entered.

Mr. Flamingo, seeing me, turned pale at the desecration, and tremblingly asked the watchman how he dared to pollute his property.

The night-constable was now satisfied—Patty's story was true, and if she would only ask Mr. Curlwell's pardon for having accosted him in the street, she might go about her business.

"Never!" exclaimed Patty, her face reddening to scarlet.

It so happened that Curlwell—the faithful valet of Lord Huntingtopper—had no intention to appear again in the watch-house, but had unhappily met his acquaintance, the feather-merchant, on his way thither, accompanied by Knuckle, who had compelled him to return. Being brought back, he felt he was obliged to appear the injured person.

"Bless my soul!" said Flamingo, in a half-whisper to the

valet—"and that creature addressed you in the street! How Mrs. Flamingo's deceived in her! This is the last bit of work she does for us." Then turning to the night-constable, he exclaimed,—"If she won't ask the gentleman's pardon, lock her up."

Patty thought of her home—poor, stricken creature, what a home!—of the last night she was to pass beneath a roof with her dead mother; and with this thought in her face, her eyes, her voice,—she approached Curlwell, and in a tone that must have made him soul-sick, said—

"I ask your pardon, sir."

"The charge is dismissed," cries Naplightly, the night-constable.

CHAPTER VII.

PATTY RETURNS HOME.—UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

When Mr. Flamingo had fairly crossed the threshold of the round-house he paused, and throwing as much solemnity as lay in his power into his figure, voice, and manner, asked of Patty, "What she thought would become of her?"

Poor girl! that thought was then busy at her heart—that thought then bewildered her: she answered not a word—but sobbed bitterly.

"See what it is to have fallen into the hands of a Christian," continued the feather-merchant. "If Mr. Curlwell had only pressed his charge,"—that worthy person being too modest to listen to his praises, had walked quickly on—"what, what could have saved you from oakum and Bridewell? If you're not quite lost to shame and goodness, you'll pray for that good man."

"Pray for him!" cried Knuckle. "Well, master, if you don't make the flesh shake upon one's bones—I tell you, as I've told you before, it was the old fellow himself who insulted the child—it was."

"Silence, sir—silence! That shocking habit you have of speaking against your betters will some day take you to Tyburn. Don't I know the gentleman well? A man with money in the Bank! A man in the confidence of one of my best customers! A man with such a fatherly look—wears powder, and everything respectable! Is it likely, eh?" asked the feather-merchant, with an invincible air. "As for you,"—and Flamingo turned to Patty—"as a Christian, I hope you'll not want bread; but—no!

—I owe it to Mrs. Flamingo—I owe it to the virtuous young people about me—you never eat another crumb of mine."

"I did nothing, sir—I said nothing—indeed, sir—I—oh, sir! —you don't know what I've suffered."—Patty could stammer out no more.

"Suffered! And what have I suffered? Is it nothing to have one's property flaunted about in a round-house? Gracious me! if the world knew what had happened to these feathers, where would be my reputation—and more, where would be my connexion? The feathers now," said Flamingo, "ar'n't worth a groat."

"Well, if they have been tumbled a little," urged Knuckle "can't Patty put 'em all to rights again?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," cried Patty, earnestly—"indeed I will—I'll not sleep first."

"Humph!" said Flamingo, "and now how do I know that the property will be safe?" Patty spoke not a word; but she looked in the face of Flamingo—in his swollen, prosperous face—and the look made his eye blink, and his lip work: he violently rubbed his chin, and said hurriedly, "Well, well, I hope after all, that you are honest; and so, under the circumstances—I've no doubt I'm setting a bad example—still, under the circumstances," (it was thus delicately Flamingo touched upon the death of Patty's mother,) "I'll bring myself to trust you. Now, go home; say your prayers, be a good girl, and particularly mind that I have the feathers to-morrow. Luke, I want you—quick."

Saying this, Mr. Flamingo walked towards his westward habitation. Now, the feather-merchant was, when all is said, not really so coarse and selfish as his words and manner proclaimed him. He did not credit all the story told, or rather cunningly hinted, by Curlwell, of Patty; nevertheless he would not trust himself to disbelieve Lord Huntingtopper's valet: he was so respectable, so well-placed, and more, he was in the establishment of a nobleman, whose lady had such a laudable love of feathers! Therefore, Flamingo suffered his belief to be nicely balanced between the valet and the girl; both might be right—both might be wrong. Flamingo was, however, one of those politic folks, who think the surest way to make people, that is, people depending upon them, better than they are, is to treat them as if they were infinitely worse. A workman had only to commit some heinous fault, and so entirely forfeit the confidence of his master, to learn for the first time what an estimable person the feather-merchant had once thought him! A man had only to become a thief, to make Flamingo earnestly declare that "he would have trusted *that* man with untold gold."

Such trust, however, it had never been his weakness to put in the human animal.

Knuckle, having said a few hurried words of comfort to Patty, followed his master. Patty, then, with quickened steps, turned towards her home. Yes, with lightened heart, she almost ran along the street, gliding and shrinking from every passer-by, as though dreading some new impediment, some terrible delay, to keep her from a hearth, where death alone remained to greet her. So happy, so strangely happy was she at her escape from the den she had quitted, so relieved from the paralysing dread that the last, last consolation would have been denied her, that, in her assurance of liberty, she seemed to lose a conviction of that irreparable misery at home: she ran once more to find her mother; hardly for the time remembering that that mother had passed away for ever.

The bell of St. Martin's tolls two, and Patty, with swollen eyes and anxious, bloodless face, is working alone. She is sewing some piece of dress, a mourning garment, a piece of decent outside black, purchased by the sacrifice of almost all necessary apparel —of the very bed covering, for which in the coming winter nights she may starve with winter cold—she is working, mechanically working, her face dead, blank with misery, her fingers only moving.

(What a hideous vanity may leer from out the ornamental mourning of the rich—what elaborate mockery of woe in gauze and flounce, bought over fashion's counter!—but what a misery on the misery of death—what sacrifice upon suffering in the black of the poor, bought with money lent—that is, sold—by the money-broker!)

The church bell had scarcely ceased to sound, when a low, distinct knock struck on the door; again, and again, yet Patty heard it not; but continued at her work, absorbed and unconscious. The door opened, and a female, silently as a shadow, glided in.

"Patty, Patty," said the visitor.

Patty lifted up her head, was about to shriek, when, by a violent effort, she subdued her emotion, and, laying down her work and rising from her chair, she asked, with trembling voice —"In the name of God, who, what are you?"

"Do you not know me, Patty?" said the woman, with a slight shudder.

"Can it be Jessy?" cried Patty.

"It is that wretch; though God bless you for calling me Jessy, that's something."

"I should not have known you; what has happened—are you

not well?" asked Patty, hurriedly, becoming alarmed at the unearthly aspect of her visitor.

Indeed, her appearance was changed and terrible. Her face looked clay-cold, and clay-wet; blank and reeking from the agony of brain and heart. Her black eyes had something awful in their wild energy, and her discoloured lips were pressed as one together, as though to master and control the passionate grief that struggled to burst from her. Thus changed, thus possessed, it was no wonder that Patty paused ere she recognised in her visitor the lost, the wretched girl, whose sympathy had awakened in her sorrowing heart a feeling of sisterly pity, of mournful gratitude. Poor creature! the look of trading misery, the reckless, flaunting air that a few hours since she deemed a fitting, necessary grace, was lost, destroyed in the intensity of mental suffering. Contrasting her past aspect with her present, she seemed a thing of vulgar vice, elevated and purified by agony; the hideous face of wretchedness affecting mirth, heightened to the solemnity of mortal tragedy.

"What's the matter? What do you want—here?" asked Patty, timidly, and endeavouring not to shrink back from the figure which—despite of her attempted firmness—seemed to dilate and grow more terrible before her. "What do you want *here?*" repeated Patty, and she glanced at the coffin. The look, on the sudden, changed the woman to meekness; and the next moment melted her into tears.

"I would not for the world, dear Patty—oh, let me for this night call you so—I would not disturb you, and at such a time—I would not, but there's something at my heart—do let me tell it—do, or my heart will break." With gushing eyes the poor outcast made this passionate request; and Patty, with pitying looks, offered her a chair.

"What is the matter?" asked Patty, with her sweet tender voice, made more cordial by the uncontrollable sorrow that possessed her visitor.

"I'll tell you," said the woman, with an effort; and in a few moments, with dry eyes, but with a voice deep and husky with subdued emotion, she thus proceeded. "I come, Patty, first to ask your forgiveness."

"You never offended me—indeed, no," said Patty.

"I tell you, yes; many a time I have laughed at you—sneered at you—called you foul names. And why? It was to relieve my heart—it would have burst if I had not. When I saw you so young, so innocent, so cheerful, working early and late for the dear soul that now lies there"—Patty unconsciously stretched her hands towards the coffin—"Ha!" cried Jessy, "you may look

there—you may pray there! I could not dare to do it—for my mother would rise in her shroud and curse me."

"No, no—do not think so," said Patty, "it is not goodness to think so."

"But let me say," cried Jessy, "what I came to say. You did not know when I sneered and laughed at you, how much I loved you; but was it for such as I was to say so? No; and so I relieved my heart with madness and vile words, and—but that is over; I have seen that to-night"—here the woman shuddered, and her cheek quivered with terror—"seen what has changed me."

"Thank heaven for it, Jessy," cried Patty, with a look of gladness.

"You forgive me?" Patty took the speaker's hand, and pressed it between her own. "And will you, before we part for ever, let me—it will ease my heart—let me tell you my miserable story?"

"If 'twill indeed please you, yes," said Patty.

"It shall be in a few words—for I am in torment while I speak; yet it is a torment, that a something, I know not what, will make me suffer. I am country-born; my childhood was one long happy holiday: I was an only child, and was to my father as his heart was to his bosom. All life to me was nothing but happy sounds and happy sights. My first trouble was the departure of a neighbour's son for the sea: but we parted with a vow of lasting love, and that vow was approved by our parents. I—I—two years passed—my heart was changed; some devil had altered my nature—I became vain, headstrong, selfish—I left my father's house a wicked, guilty thing, and for three years have tried to hide my shame here, in London. Oh! those three years! Had the sky for that time rained fire upon me, I had not suffered half so much. My story is nearly done. Two hours since I was in the street—laughing, loudly laughing from an empty and corrupted heart. A man slowly passed me; with a laugh, I laid my hand upon his shoulder—he turned his head—oh, Christ! it was my father!"

With these words the wretched woman sank back in the chair, and with fallen mouth, fixed eyes, and ghastly features, looked, on the sudden, death-struck. Patty was about to rise to seek assistance, when Jessy grasped her by the hand, and held her with convulsive strength.

In a few minutes she became composed, and then proceeded:—

"Patty, I am now determined. I quit this life of horror. I will pray to find something like peace—like goodness. I have done you harm—will you forgive me—forgive the wretched Magdalen—and—yes—pray for her?"

Saying this, Jessy, in a passion of grief, dropped upon her knees. Patty, starting from her chair, and hiding her face in her hands, sobbed—

"I do forgive you—I pray for you—I—God in heaven bless and strengthen you!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A FUNERAL.—ST. JAMES'S PALACE.—THE PRINCE OF WALES.

'*We give Thee hearty thanks* for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world—"

Thus, in measured, metallic note, spoke the curate of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields—whilst the daughter Patty could have screamed in anguish at the thanksgiving. A few more words—another and another look—yet another—now the piling earth has hidden all—and the forlorn creature stands alone in the world. The last few moments have struck apart the last link that still held her to a beloved object—and now indeed she feels it is in eternity. Two or three women press about her—turn her from the grave—and, garrulously kind, preach to her deaf ears that "all is for the best," and that "to mourn is a folly."

All this I gathered from the gossips who brought back Patty to her dreary, empty home. There, after brief and common consolation, they quitted her—and there, for a time, the reader must leave the stricken, meek-hearted feather-dresser.

Early the next morning, I found myself in the hands of Mr. Flamingo. The slight disorder—in truth, more avowed than real—I had suffered in the round-house, had, in the eyes of the tradesman, been amply remedied by Patty, and my owner turned me reverently between his thumb and finger, and gazed and gazed at me as though, for his especial profit only, I had dropt from the wing of an angel.

Great was the stir throughout the household of Flamingo—and great the cause thereof. He had received an order from the palace of St. James's: his very soul was plumed—for he should get off his feathers!

This I heard and saw, and—I confess it—with the trepidation of expectant vanity, beheld the feather-merchant make selection from his stock. At length, with melting looks, and a short, self-complacent sigh, he placed me—I was sure of it—as the crowning

glory, the feather of feathers, among my kind. I was to wave my snowy purity in St. James's!

And for this, thought I, was I drest—prepared by the lean fingers of want, in an unwholesome garret? Alas! I have since felt—ay, a thousand times—that, if dim-eyed vanity would use the spectacles of truth, she would at times see blood on her satins—blood on her brocades—blood on her lace—on every rich and glistening thread that hangs about her—blood. She would see herself a grim idol, worshipped by the world's unjust necessities—and so beholding, would feel a quicker throb of heart, a larger compassion for her forced idolaters.

"To the palace," cried Flamingo to the hackney-coachman, summoned to bear myself and companions on our glorious mission. "To the palace," cried the feather-merchant, with new lustre in his eyes, harmony in his voice, and a delicious tingling of every nerve that filled his whole anatomy with music. "To the palace," were really the words uttered by Flamingo; yet in very truth, he believed he said—"To Paradise."

Not that St. James's was *terra incognita* to Mr. Flamingo; a Marco Polo's domain filled with golden dreams. Certainly not: Mr. Flamingo knew exactly the number of steps composing that private way to heaven,—the back staircase. He had smiled, and trembled, and bowed and wriggled, and smirked and cringed his way to the patronage of Queen Charlotte (of odorous memory). This exalting truth Mr. Flamingo had several times tested; and that in a matter peculiarly flattering to himself. For instance, a very fine cockatoo had been thrown in to the tradesman among a lot of foreign feathers: this cockatoo Mr. Flamingo submitted to the inspection of her Majesty, who was graciously pleased to say to it "Pretty Poll." On another occasion, Flamingo took a Java sparrow to the palace; which bird was graciously permitted by the Queen to perch upon her little finger, her Majesty still further condescending to cry—"Swee-e-e-t!" These circumstances were at the time totally overlooked by the Court historian; but they are recorded, written in very fine round-hand, in the "Flamingo Papers."

I had scarcely been an hour in the Palace, ere my memory began to fail me. Yes, all the previous scenes of my existence, that an hour before lived most vividly in my recollection, began to fade and grow dim, and take the mingled extravagance and obscurity of a dream. Was it possible that I had ever been a thing of barter between a savage and a sailor for pig-tail? Could I have ever known a Jack Lipscomb? Had I crossed the seas in the dungeon of a ship? Was it possible that I could detect the odour of bilge-water? Was there such a haunt for

human kind as the Minories? And that old Jew—surely he was a spectre—a part of night-mare? His large-lipped, globe-eyed daughter, too, she—with all her plumpness—was no more substantial! And then, that dim garret in the alley—the death and enduring innocence—the heaviness and misery of human days—the suffering that made of mortal breath a wearying disease—all the worst penalty of life—had I known and witnessed it? Could it be possible? And was there really a Patty Butler looking with meek face upon a frowning world, and smiling down misfortune into pity?

I confess that—having delighted in the atmosphere of a palace for scarcely an hour—all these realities seemed waning into visions of a fevered sleep. It was only by a strong effort—by a determination to analyse my past emotions—that I could convince myself of the existence of a world of wretchedness without—of want, and suffering, and all the sad and wicked inequalities of human life. How may sudden prosperity mingle Lethe in its nectar?

I pass by moments of tumultuous anxiety—of hope, painful in its sweet intensity—of the delirium of assured aggrandisement. It is now the remnant of my former self that speaks, and, therefore, be the utterance calm and philosophic.

It was my fate to be chosen one of the three plumes—be it remembered, the middle and the noblest one—to nod above the baby Prince of Wales, all royally slumbering in his royal cradle.

It was my destiny, in 1762, to commemorate the conquest and bloodshed of 1345—to represent an ancestral plume whereof poor John of Bohemia was plucked that he of the black mail might be nobly feathered: yes, it was my happy duty to wave above *Ich Dien* in 1762.

Ich Dien—"I serve." Such is the Prince of Wales's motto; and looking down upon the Princelet's face—upon his velvet cheek brought into the world for the world's incense—viewing the fleshly idol in its weak babyhood,—I repeated for it "I serve!" And then, in the spirit of the future, asked—What? Bacchus—Venus—or what nobler deity?

The Prince of Wales—a six weeks' youngling—sleeps, and ceremony, with stinted breath, waits at the cradle. How glorious that young one's destinies! How moulded and marked—expressly fashioned for the high delights of earth—the chosen one of millions for millions' homage! The terrible beauty of a crown shall clasp those baby temples—that rose-bud mouth shall speak the iron law—that little pulpy hand shall hold the sceptre and the ball. But now, asleep in the sweet mystery of babyhood, the

little brain already busy with the things that meet us at the vestibule of life—for even then we are not alone, but surely have about us the hum and echo of the coming world,—but now thus, and now upon a giddying throne! What grandeur—what intensity of bliss—what an almighty heritage to be born to—to be sent upon this earth, accompanied by invisible angels to take possession of!

The baby king coos in his sleep, while a thousand spirits meet upon the palace floor—sport in the palace air—hover about the cradle—and with looks divine and loving as those that watched the bulrush ark tossed on the wave of Egypt, gaze upon the bright new-comer, on him that shall be the Lord's anointed! What purifying blessings purge the atmosphere of all earthly taint! What a halo of moral glory beams around that baby head—that meek vicegerent of the King of kings! Wisdom will nurse him on her knees—Pity and Goodness be his play-fellows—Humility and Gentleness his close companions—and Love for all men, a monitor constant as the pulses of his heart!

And will it, indeed, be so? Poor little child—hapless creature—most unfortunate in the fortune of a prince! Are such, indeed, the influences about your cradle—will such, in very truth, be your teaching? Will you, indeed, be taught as one of earth—a thing of common wants and common affections? Will you be schooled in the open pages of humanity—or taught by rote the common cant of princes? Will you not, with the first dim glimmerings of human pride, see yourself a thing aloof from all—a piece of costly selfishness—an idol formed only for the knees of men—a superhuman creature, yea, a wingless deity? Will not this be the teaching of the court—this the lesson that shall prate pure nature from your heart, and place therein a swelling arrogance, divorcing you from all, and worshipping self in its most tyrannous desires, in its deepest abominations? Will you remain among the brotherhood of men,—or will you be set apart only to snuff their incense and to hear their prayers? Splendid solitude of state—most desolate privilege of princes!

With this thought, I felt a strange compassion for the Prince of Wales. All the glories of the palace seemed to vanish from about me, and I looked down upon the sleeping creature whom I was there to honour, with a deep pity, a sorrow for the slippery, trying fortune he was born to.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCE OF WALES EXHIBITED.—THE COUNTESS BLUSHROSE.—DREADFUL ACCIDENT TO MR. FLAMINGO.

I soon discovered that their Majesties George the Third and Queen Charlotte had benevolently consented that their baby should be exhibited to the men and women of England. These tidings had rung like a merry peal of bells throughout London; and on the very morning after my exaltation to the Prince of Wales's coronet, crowds were clustering at the gates of the palace.

Here, however, I must fain confess to a disappointment. Being in the very temple of royalty, I at first indulged in the most extravagant expectations of the moral dignity, the uttered wisdom of the high and fortunate people about me. I watched the King's mouth, as a bride gazes on her wedding casket, rapt with an assurance of its contained richness. I followed the motions of the Queen, as though, for a time, she had taken leave of the skies, to dazzle and to dignify a benighted planet. Such were my first emotions: but let me be frank—they were of brief endurance. I very soon discovered his dread Majesty to be a mere man who loved mutton for dinner, and the Queen from Paradise, a quiet little woman, with a humility so marked that it disdained not decimal fractions.

And then there were the Lords in Waiting—the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber—the women of the like Elysium—and those doomed, fragile dolls and victims of state—God help them!—the Maids of Honour. In the simplicity of my inexperience, I believed all these people to be of another order of flesh and blood—to possess a more exquisite anatomy—to be refined by the pure and healthful atmosphere of a court into natures above the sordid influences of this nether sphere; to be, indeed, mid-intelligences between men and angels. Must I say it? I have found the coarse mind of the merest footman in the lackey peer; and in the Lady of the Bedchamber, the small envy, the petty heart-burning of Molly the chambermaid at the Star and Garter. Alas, too! for the Maids of Honour! Hapless images of ceremony—poor, moving anatomies, with eyes that must not wink, tongues that must not speak; and, hardest tyranny of all, with mouths that must not yawn at the dull discipline that consumes

them. I have seen them in the royal presence stand on their throbbing feet, until the blood has vanished from their lips. Had I been a fairy wand, I would have changed them straight; have bestowed upon them the paradise of a three-legged stool, with a cow to milk beneath the odour-breathing hawthorn.

If, however, the Maids of Honour affected my compassion, the Ladies in Waiting excited my highest admiration. Here, I thought, are women—doting wives and loving mothers—quitting the serene and holy circle of their own hearths—relinquishing for an appointed term the happiness and tenderness of home, to endure a glorifying servitude beneath the golden yoke of Ceremony. Here, at least, I thought, is self-devotion: here a noble sacrifice to noble objects—here at once the heroism and the true religion of loyalty.

The Countess Blushrose was a Lady in Waiting. Providence had expressly fashioned her for the ennobling function. She had some vague notion that there were human creatures; a white race, something higher in the scheme of the world than the mere Hottentot: but it was also a part of her creed that, like horses and oxen, they were sent for no other purpose to this earth, save for that of ministering in any manner to the will and wish of herself, her friends, and her immediate acquaintance. The Countess never neglected her religious duties, for she had a pew that a Sybarite might have slept in; and therefore generally once a week seemed to listen to the home-simplicities of the pulpit—of death, and common dust, and common judgment. Nevertheless, it was plain that her ladyship possessed a strength of mind that continued superior to such antique prejudices—hence, for many a year, she remained an unconverted hearer. The world, the habitable world, to her was composed of about an area of two miles, with St. James's Palace for the centre. Any part beyond that boundary was, to her, mysterious as the Mogul country: she looked upon it with the intelligence that possessed the theological opponents of Columbus, when he talked of a new continent: allowing it to exist, and to be once reached, there were certain currents that rendered impossible any return from it. To the Countess Blushrose, Nature herself had written *Nec ultra* on the west side of Temple Bar.

The Countess was allowed to be beautiful as the most beautiful statue: and save in the presence of Majesty, viewed all things unbendingly and with a stony gaze. She seemed to make the atmosphere about her cold by her very looks. She rather appeared an exquisite piece of machinery—an improvement on

the mechanist's wooden bird and iron fly of old—a wonderful work constructed and adorned by the laboured ingenuity of man, than a creature warmed by human blood, and sanctified with a human soul. Yet men called her beautiful. Nay, born a baronet's daughter, she had owed her coronet to her creamy cheek and high, abstracted gaze. The heart of the Earl of Blushrose had been led away in chains of ice. He had been frozen into matrimony by the spells of a sorceress; and, influenced by his partner, seemed to his old friends never to have recovered his natural heat.

At the time of my elevation to St. James's, the Countess had only one day relieved a sister Lady in Waiting in her exalted ceremonies. At that time, the Countess had an infant son—Lord Tootle—in the cradle. She was very fond of it—really very fond of it; but then she felt such devotion towards the Palace. This truth I afterwards learned from a brief incident. The child was born weak and puny. "Madam," said the Doctor, "you must nurse this babe yourself."

"How can you talk so ridiculously, Doctor?" said the Countess.

"Indeed, your ladyship, I advise only what is necessary—indispensable," urged the Doctor.

"Necessary! How can I submit to such a tie when there is the Palace to—"

"Well, Madam," said the Doctor in conclusion, casting a significant glance at the babe, and then at its mother,—"if you do not nurse the child yourself, my word upon it, 'twill die—die, Madam, die."

Whereupon the Countess, gently elevating her eyelids, said—and only said—"Poor thing!"

I have dwelt thus long upon the character of the Countess Blushrose, as she will be found a somewhat important person in my narrative. Indeed it was to her that I owed my speedy removal from the palace. But of this in due time.

At the opening of this chapter the reader was acquainted with the condescending intention of their Majesties: the Prince of Wales, in his cot or cradle of state, was to be exhibited in bib and tucker to his future liege subjects. Every precaution had been made to prevent the too near approximation of the curious vulgar to the resplendent baby: the rockers sat at the cradle within an inclosure at the end of a state apartment, part of the royal household lined the room, and then, units of the world without were suffered to enter at one door, and walking past the cradle, and casting one look—for a second was scarcely possible—at the majestic infant, were rapidly

conducted out at a door opposite, to the world they had come from; a world they felt themselves henceforth authorised to gladden with tales of the baby Prince—of the glories of a palace.

It was curiously instructive to watch the beaming countenances of the happy few who, having elbowed it lustily in the crowd outside—who in the excess of loyalty had thrust and fought their neighbours to catch a look of princely babyhood—now arranged their rumpled habits, and tried to conjure serenity to their red and streaming faces. Men and women of nearly all conditions poured along the room, and glanced at that marvellous baby. The only court attire commanded for the event was decent cleanliness—in very truth (if history be anything), not always palace wear.

Great was the veneration paid to the Prince! Men, whom I afterwards recognised in the world, came to look their homage to the all-excelling infant; men, who with red wine on their table, and their knees at the Christmas fire, would with barred and bolted door hear the starved orphan wail the Christian carol in the frozen street; men, with hearts close as their fobs, felt the said hearts marvellously touched and melted when they looked upon the Prince! How deep, how exceeding their sympathy for baby helplessness hedged about by palace guards,—how beautiful, how touchingly beautiful, is infancy born to dominion whereon "the sun sets not!"

And there were other lookers—honest, simple souls, who with a hurried, almost fearful glance at baby royalty, felt themselves richer for their coming lives. They had seen things called babies before, but the Prince was a blessing—a glory in lace, for the first time vouchsafed to the world.

Some trod the palace floor as though they feared to hear their own breath: had their shoes creaked, it was plain they must have fainted.

Others, again, looked anxiously, fearfully about them, as though, like men in an Indian wood, they feared some wild beast, with death in its jaws to spring out upon them. Many of these—I watched them—never saw the Prince at all. They approached the cradle pantingly, but urged on by the attendants, passed it ere they could call up courage to look upon the dazzling glory within.

I was thus contemplating the various characters of the crowd, when I beheld a face I thought not wholly strange to me. After a minute I recognised the visitor: it was my first acquaintance in England, Shadrach Jacobs, the old Jew of the Minories. Having that day washed himself, it was difficult for any one to detect the Hebrew dealer through the strange disguise. Washed, however, he had been,—washed, and dressed in black and

buckles, as though he had been going to court at the New Jerusalem. He hobbled past the cradle, gazing with his raven eye, which kindled sparklingly, but whether at the babe or the lace that half smothered it, I leave to be divined by the genii of Solomon's brazen kettles.

Immediately following the Jew came Miriam, his voluminous daughter. Great was her beauty, but greater still her strength: else how at her ears, her neck, wrists, and fingers, could she have borne the many trophies of her victories bought by sailors' wages out of goldsmith's cases? Miriam was there; but where was Jack Lipscombe? Where was my first English friend? Alas! sick, perilously sick on an outward-bound voyage. Poor Jack was in his hammock. No matter. Tom Bracely of the "Good Intent" went with Miriam to St. James's.

Thus, seeing an old acquaintance, my thoughts went to Patty Butler. "Will she," I asked myself, "be here?" Then I looked hopefully about me. Another minute, and I saw—not Patty—but her smug employer, Mr. Flamingo, with Mrs. Flamingo beside him—both gazing about them, joyous as spirits new to Paradise. Though Flamingo was loyal to the very nails, his visit was not paid only to the infant Prince. No; feathers had something to do at the tradesman's heart, and he came—kindly bringing his wife with him—to behold the exaltation of his ware. I could see him look up at myself and two companions, as if he felt the soul of the Prince was there in the white plumes, and nowhere else; as if the dignity of the Prince would have been naked as a day-old sparrow, but for the feathers, which were—in Flamingo's mind—its natural clothing.

With these feelings Flamingo approached the cradle, and Flamingo's evil spirit kept close at his skirts.

The Prince of Wales has fallen fast asleep. Flamingo prepares himself to look his homage. He is as close as ceremony permits his advance: when some demon in the air tickles his nostrils, for the feather merchant stands fixed, throws his head back, and explodes in the loudest sneeze that ever profaned the roof-tree of a palace.

As Flamingo sneezed, the Prince of Wales, startled by the noise, woke—and waking, roared most lustily. The baby of a bacon-fed ploughman never yelled in higher pitch.

Flamingo was about to pray that the floor would open and swallow him. Ere, however, he could frame his petition, he was hurried to the door by the attendants; further admission was denied to thronging sight-seers, and for that day (and all owing to the untowardness of a sneeze), the shew was ended.

CHAPTER X.

I AM CARRIED OFF FROM THE PALACE—THE COUNTESS BLUSHROSE AND HER CHAPLAIN.

FEW and brief were my days of glory in the Palace. Long ere the Prince of Wales cut his first tooth (what a chapter might be written on the teeth of princes!) I was removed from my high, intoxicating place of state; plucked from the coronet. Nevertheless, a splendour still hung about me; I was still enriched by the recollections of the past. I had waved above the slumbers and the waking smiles of the Prince of Wales—I had been a type of state and honour—I had been glorified by position—and was, therefore, a relic dear to the associations of those who trod the carpet of a palace as though they walked the odorous turf of Eden. It was to this love, this veneration that, I am convinced, I owed my speedy removal from St. James's. Had the Countess Blushrose felt less devotion towards the Prince of Wales, I might for years have remained in the Palace; it may be, thrown aside to pass into the stomachs of Palace moths. I was, however, doomed to a more various destiny. The Countess Blushrose refined away the vulgarity of mere honesty by the excess of loyalty. A philosopher, or—if he were duly hired for the coarse word—an Old Bailey practitioner, would say the Countess stole me. Well; in hard, iron phrase, she did so; but surely the spirit that prompted the felony, made the theft a divine one! Even the accusing angel must have put his finger to his lip, and inwardly said "Mum!" as the Countess, in a flutter of triumph, bore me from the palace. How her heart beat—for, snugly concealed under her short satin cloak, I felt the throbbing organ—beat, as the beautiful robber entered her carriage.

I doubt not, there are simple folks who will marvel at this story—nay, it may be, give no belief to it. They may ask—"What! a countess filch a feather, when a word in the proper place would doubtless have made it her lawful chattel? Such petty pilfering might have been looked for at the hands of Mrs. Scott, the Prince's wet-nurse—of Jane Simpson or Catherine Johnson, rockers—but from Countess Blushrose!"

I confess it: in my inexperience of the world, such were the very thoughts that oppressed me; now it is otherwise. Not without melancholy I own it: but I have found that with some

natures it would pain and perplex their moral anatomy to move direct to an object: like snakes, they seem formed to take pleasure in indirect motion; with them the true line of moral beauty is a curve. Had Queen Charlotte herself bestowed me upon the Countess, the free gift, I am sure of it, had not conveyed so much pleasure as the pilfered article.

Borne from the palace, I speedily arrived at the mansion of the Countess, in —— Square. A curious adventure greeted me, I may say, at the threshold. As her ladyship passed through the hall, she was met by a mild gentlemanly looking person. There was a certain meaning in his look—a something significant of disquietude softened and controlled by constitutional calmness. "May I speak some words with your ladyship?" he asked.

"Certainly, Mr. Inglewood," answered the Countess; and, turning into an apartment, she let her cloak drop from her shoulders, cast me upon the table, and then, with the voluptuous majesty of Juno, sank upon a chair. "Have you heard how the dear Bishop is to-day?" she inquired; and, then, without waiting for an answer, she continued: "poor man! what he's made of I can't think—mere flesh and blood had never lasted till now."

"His lordship has been a great sufferer," replied Mr. Inglewood; "but to-day he is better."

"But there's no hope—impossible. He mends and he mends; but then he breaks and he breaks. That cough of his *ought* to have killed anybody. Well, Mr. Inglewood,"—and here the Countess, lifting me from the table, and now idly fanning her cheek with me, and now breathing upon me, and smiling as at her breath I trembled—"well, Mr. Inglewood," she said, "I suppose we must all die."

"Thank God!" was the answer.

"Really now," asked her ladyship, still waving me to and fro in her white hand, "don't you think this world would be a much prettier place if death never showed his wicked features in it?"

Mr. Inglewood gravely shook his head, and then with a gentle smile asked—"Ought we to say wicked, madam?"

"I can't tell—perhaps not; you as a clergyman are bound, you know, to have other opinions. And yet," added her ladyship, condescending to glance with brilliant archness at the reverend man,—"and yet, I dare say death, though at times he may be thought a tolerable sort of thing by a curate, is ugly enough—oh, a perfect fright—to a bishop."

"I hope not, Madam," answered the private chaplain of the Countess.

"You have no notion," asked her ladyship, "who will have the vacant mitre? Very good, Mr. Inglewood; by that look of humility I can perceive that mitres make no part of your dreams. You are above such vanities."

"In truth, your ladyship, though I'm not of humbler stuff than bishops are sometimes made of——"

"Certainly not," interrupted the Countess quickly; "I don't see why you should despair. There is the Bishop of ——; he was only chaplain, and taught—what is it!—*hic, hoc* to the children. You are certainly as good as he—and then you can swim so well! How lucky it was that you brought his lordship's nephew out of the Isis! How very lucky for your prospects—though I doubt if the younger brother will ever thank you for it. How strange now, if some day it should prove that you fished a mitre from a river!" Thus spoke her ladyship to the dependant parson—spoke in a cold, icy tone of banter, that—I could see it—made the man wince as he listened.

"Madam," said Inglewood, "I have no such hope; I will add, no such wish. Contentment—"

"To be sure!" cried her ladyship—"contentment is the prettiest thing in the world. Oh, it saves people such a deal of trouble! 'Tis an excellent thing—a beautiful invention for the lower orders; and then it 's so easy for them to obtain—easy as their own bacon, milk, and eggs."

"Very often, Madam," replied Inglewood, with some emphasis; "nay, too often, quite as easy."

"But with us, who are constantly troubled with a thousand things, contentment would be as out of place as a gipsy in a court suit. I think, if ever in my life I was to feel perfectly and truly content, I should expire on the instant."

"We pray against sudden death," said Inglewood, solemnly.

"Lud!" cried the Countess, startled by her chaplain's tone—"don't name it; I do, most heartily. Don't talk of it—I'd forgot—you had something to say, Mr. Inglewood?"

"Will you forgive me, Madam," said the chaplain, "if, presuming on my function, I interfere with matters in this house, as I have been told, not within my duties?"

"Mr. Inglewood!" cried the Countess, with some surprise, throwing me upon the table, "pray go on, sir: as a clergyman, nothing, sir, should be below your interference that—"

"That affects the peace of mind—the happiness of a fellow creature," added Inglewood.

"Very right, sir; very right: as a Christian minister of the Established Church, nothing less should be expected of you. I have the greatest opinion of your morals, Mr. Inglewood—the

greatest. I only hope that the Earl—for I can perceive, by your manner, that it is of his lordship you are about to speak—"

"Indeed, madam—I—"

The interruption was in vain. The Countess, with increasing rapidity of speech—accompanied with gestures that left nothing for the chaplain to do, save to await with resignation the moment of silence—continued to repeat her sentiments of confidence in the judgment, vigilance, and devotion of the divine, together with hints and suspicions directed at the connubial loyalty of his lordship, towards whom her vanity took the place of love. It was her instant and fixed belief that her chaplain—the man of peace—was about to vindicate his functions by becoming a domestic tell-tale; that he was about to prove himself her faithful friend, by making her "the most wretched of women."

At length—for even the tongue of a vain and jealous woman will stop (an invincible proof of the ending of all mortal things)—at length the Countess was silent; and, throwing herself back in her chair, with the deepest devotion of a domestic heroine, was prepared for the worst. She had always felt that she was reserved by fate for something dreadful, and the moment was arrived! The Earl was a fickle, false, and selfish man, and she—sweet martyr to the marriage service—she, alas! was his wife.

"Madam," said Inglewood, somewhat abashed and confounded by the energy of the Countess, "were I base enough—but no"—and the chaplain stammered, and his face for a minute flushed—"I have no word to speak of the Earl: were there that to say of him which your ladyship's fears—most groundless fears, I am sure—would listen to, it would little suit my place or nature, Madam, to utter it."

"What does the man mean?" asked the Countess. "Did you not say that you had to speak of something that affected happiness and peace of mind—and all that?"

"True, Madam," answered Inglewood.

"Well, then—and to whose happiness, to whose peace of mind could you possibly allude, if—"

"Will your ladyship hear me? I will be very brief," said the chaplain, with an inward twinge—a rising of the heart—at the inborn, ingrained selfishness of the beautiful creature before him.

"Oh, say what you like—I suppose I must hear you," answered the Countess, again taking me from the table, and pettishly waving me about her.

"A person in your ladyship's household has committed a fault—"

"Of course," said the Countess—"such creatures do nothing else."

"She has proved not trustworthy in the duty confided to her."

"I hear of nothing else," cried the Countess, waving me more violently. "Let her be turned away immediately."

"You will pardon me, Madam: she was about to be cast from the house—cast out broken-hearted and with a blighted name—when I took it on myself to stand between her, and, for what I know, destruction, and to plead her cause before you."

The Countess looked at the chaplain impatiently—angrily, and then said, "Mr. Inglewood, I am sorry for it. I wish you would confine yourself to your duties."

"And what, may it please your ladyship—what are they?" asked the clergyman, with calm voice and fixed look.

"I trust, sir, you know them—to say prayers, and make or read a sermon," answered the Countess.

"And nothing more, Madam?" inquired Inglewood.

"Surely not. What else?" cried her ladyship, with raised voice and wondering eyes.

"At least, Madam, to strive to practise what I pray and preach," answered the chaplain.

"Mr. Inglewood, his lordship, out of esteem for you, placed you here; you were lucky enough to save a relative's life, and perhaps it was right—I don't say it wasn't—to acknowledge the attention; nevertheless, I will have no monkish, papistical principles put forward in this house. If you can comport yourself with respect and decency, as a chaplain ought to do, remain where you are; if not—I say, if not, sir—but you of course know what must follow."

"Perfectly well, Madam. I am either to remain a salaried mockery—an inward apostate—a thing of outward observance—"

"I beg, sir," cried the Countess, impatiently—"I beg you will use better language."

"A creature, wearing the skin-deep livery of truth," continued Inglewood, his face glowing, and his eye flashing as he spoke—"foul and leprous within—a hideous mountebank, owing the daily bread of daily hypocrisy to an adroit juggling with words; I am to do this, to take the place of the fool of other times in his lordship's household, or I am to quit it? His lordship, Madam—"

But at this moment Earl Blushrose entered the apartment.

CHAPTER XI.

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS OF THE EARL AND COUNTESS BLUSHROSE.—PECULATION BY LORD TOOTLE'S MAID.

"You come in good time," said the Countess, with icy speech, "in excellent time for Mr. Inglewood's eloquence."

"I am always happy to listen to Mr. Inglewood," said the Earl, politely bowing towards the wife of his bosom. His lordship then graciously smiled upon his chaplain, and drawing a chair, ceremoniously seated himself, as though resigned to a long discourse. This formality somewhat abashed the worthy chaplain; but there was another circumstance which increased his confusion. He knew that for the past week the wedded couple had not once met; and the feigned civility interchanged between them gave certain omen of a rising storm. Their general bearing was that of polished indifference; but when either of them was stung into extreme politeness, hostilities were sure to follow. The Earl could have loved his wife, nay, when he married, he did love her: but she had chilled him into coldness. Her excelling beauty had fascinated him; but too late he found that he had sacrificed his dearest hopes to a statue. The Countess was that most terrible, but happily that rarest, evil of creation, a selfish woman. Supremely arrogant in her personal charms, her looking-glass presented her with all the external world contained; whilst self—self—self sang to her soul a never-ending lullaby. "Would to God!" cried her husband, as one day he looked upon her fatal loveliness with moistening eyes—"would to God she could change that face for a heart!" She would not have bartered one day's bloom of it for the maternal pride of a Cornelia.

"And now, Mr. Inglewood," said the Earl, "now for your household sermon. I see how it is," he continued, marking the discomfort of the chaplain, keenly observing too the cloudy brow of the Countess,—"I see how it is; as usual, you have been discoursing to her ladyship."

Here Inglewood inwardly shivered; for he knew by fatal experience how his lordship—otherwise kind and considerate towards him—delighted to play him off in his churchman's character against the Countess. It was, to the Earl's thinking, an exquisite touch of policy to correct his wife—correct, did I say? no, the Earl had no such desperate thought; but to punish

the partner of his fortunes with the rod of the Church. The Earl, I say, considered this to be a stroke of fine policy: some folks may call it conjugal cowardice.

"My lord," said Inglewood, determined to make an effort to extricate himself—"I will defer my suit—for, indeed, it was a suit I had to urge, and not a sermon—until to-morrow."

"Certainly not, Mr. Inglewood," cried her ladyship, affecting a distrustful glance towards her husband. "Proceed, I beg of you. I assure you, my lord, Mr. Inglewood was talking very charmingly—very much so when you interrupted us. I am sure he had something of importance to communicate; something that you, doubtless, ought to hear—I beg he will continue." All this was said with meaning, inquisitive eyes, and in a tone of suppressed suffering; so admirably did the unfeeling wife act jealousy—so perfectly did her very heartlessness assume a heart. At once, his lordship knew that he was reserved for some mysterious mischief, and so resolved to make the first attack.

(Poor Inglewood—poor chaplain! And he—he was to be the sentient shuttlecock, struck in cruel sport from wife to husband—from husband back to wife! At that moment how did his heart yearn for the paradise of a Welsh curacy!)

"Her ladyship, Mr. Inglewood," cried the Earl quickly, for the first time in his life getting the advance speech of his wife, and valorously determining to keep it—"Her ladyship—for all she may affect towards yourself—has, I know, the greatest veneration for your worth, your honesty. She loves plain-speaking dearly; though perhaps it might be impolitic at all times to avow it. Still, Mr. Inglewood, you must not be too ascetic with her ladyship; you must be a little indulgent. You must not wage such a deadly crusade against piquet. I know what you have said of a woman gamester; I have listened with great edification to your description of the terrible sect; have really shuddered at the frightful picture; at the anatomy, I may say, you have prepared from what for all good purpose has ceased to live—a lady gambler; nevertheless, my dear Mr. Inglewood"—and here his lordship wreaked such cordiality upon his remonstrance—"nevertheless, you must not confound a casual instance with a custom; you must not consider her ladyship a hopeless idolater of painted paper, if now and then—to give wings to a heavy hour—she takes a hand or so. Really, you *must* not, Mr. Inglewood." Thus spoke his lordship; and in the vanity of his masculine heart he thought he had achieved a wondrous triumph over the woman he had vowed to love and cherish. The lady, however, who had as strongly sworn, proved herself at least an equal match for the man she loved, honoured, and obeyed. As for

Inglewood, he sat with his lips glued together. The polite vehemence of the Earl had kept him silent: now, her ladyship was about to speak, and he knew that nought remained for him but to suffer. With what scorching softness in her eyes—with what bitter self-complacency—with what an obtrusive sense of martyrdom,—did the Countess Blushrose carefully construct a handful of innuendos, every one of them enough to wound a woman's peace for ever!

"I'm sure my lord,"—(if a man could be killed by music, the mortal melody of her ladyship's well-educated voice had certainly slain her husband,)—"I'm sure, that is I hope, I am always a patient listener to Mr. Inglewood. I know the goodness that prompts him; the conscience that animates every word: I know his devotion to the high and abstract character, as I think I have heard you call it,—you see, my lord, how I treasure all your syllables,—yes, the high and abstract character of his function,—I know his regard for the family—his especial consideration for ourselves, and therefore from him can bear anything. Nevertheless, my lord, as I was saying to Mr. Inglewood when you entered—that is, I was about to say—I would not have him scold you as I know he does. He must not take upon common report—the world is so censorious, the world so delights to destroy wedded confidence—what I never can believe, at least not all of it. And, therefore, my lord, I say he must not scold you."

(Has the reader watched a well-grown kitten with its maiden mouse? Has he seen how that velvet-coated, playful creature, having first crushed its victim's loins with all its teeth, drops it; and now, crouching apart, with serene assurance that the miserable wretch cannot escape, watches with sweet forbearance its writhings and its strugglings, the very hopelessness of its agony to get away? How the said kitten,—its claws humanely sheathed, they having already done their work—puts forth one paw, and now taps the mouse on one side—now on the other—and turns it over and over—and all in play—all in the prettiest sport?)

"No, Mr. Inglewood," continued her ladyship,—"his lordship has, I know, his faults; still, he is not the unscrupulous libertine"—

"Madam!" exclaimed his lordship, firing at the word, and then turning fiercely round upon his chaplain,—"Mr. Inglewood, what is this?"

Mr. Inglewood, in patient amazement looked at the wedded pair, then asked, "What, my lord?"

"Am I, sir, indebted to your insinuations for this character? Is it thus, in my own house, you fulfil a mission of peace?"

"I protest, my lord," stammered Inglewood,—"I protest I"—

"Oh, Mr. Inglewood is a plain speaker," cried the Countess, delighted at the success of her artifice. "And then so faithful, so vivid an artist, too! I am sure I am delighted with the portrait that, as you tell me, my lord, Mr. Inglewood has passed off for me. It must have been so grateful to a husband,—so flattering to his wife! And then it is so comfortable to have at one's elbow a kind remembrancer of one's little faults. Not that I want to know all your lordship's treasons,—and even if I did, Mr. Inglewood is so good, he would never tell me *all*."

The chaplain was by nature and self-discipline a meek, forbearing man, but he was full of generous impulses, and the implied slander of her ladyship was too much for his patience: he therefore committed a great breach of decorum; for, ere her ladyship had well concluded her sentence, Mr. Inglewood brought down his clenched fist upon the table with such a report that the Countess leapt in her chair with a slight shriek. "Mr. Inglewood!" exclaimed the astonished Earl,—"you forget yourself. Do you know, sir, what you are?"

"Yes, my lord," replied Inglewood, with sudden calmness,—"no longer your chaplain. I entered your lordship's service as a minister of peace: I will not—no, my lord, will not—to suit the fickle humours of the great, be made a scapegoat and a firebrand. I am no longer, sir, your servant."

"Come, come," said the good-natured nobleman, "not so hasty, Mr. Inglewood. Spoil not your hopes in life by a piece of temper."

"My hopes in this life, my lord," said Inglewood, "are a quiet conscience, health, and a cordial faith, let them make what mistakes they will, in my fellow-creatures. Of these three hopes, it may please God to deprive me of one; nevertheless, two—whilst my reason lasts—must, and shall remain with me."

"Mr. Inglewood—I have been wrong; I confess as much, and—"

"My lord," replied Inglewood firmly, yet respectfully, "*I* have been wrong; and by quitting your service can make the only reparation due to myself: understand me, my lord—to myself. I now know my place: it must be my own house—my own roof—though wind and snow drive through it; my own hearth, though with scarce a log to warm it; my own time, that I may work to know the mystery within me. I thank you, my lord, with all my heart I thank you, for this relief from bondage. You intended kindly by me: but I feel it, my lord—I should dwarf and wither under your patronage: I should never grow to be *a man!*"

"You know best," said the Earl, resuming his dignity. "I would not by my favours blight a giant. Come, come," said the Earl smiling, "you are a young man—a very young man. Let us talk of this to-morrow."

"My lord," answered Inglewood, "I have made my election; I am free. Yet, my lord, let me leave your house a peace-maker." Then turning to the Countess, he said, "Will your ladyship grant me a moment's hearing? for what I have to say must interest you." Her ladyship nodded dignified assent. "I would plead for a weak and foolish woman. She has betrayed her trust. Yet, I believe 'twas pride, a silly pride—no deep sin—that beguiled her."

"What woman's this?" asked the Earl.

"One beneath your roof, my lord. One of your tenant's daughters, hired to tend your child. This morning—"

"Ten thousand pardons, my lady," cried an elderly, hard-featured woman, bursting into the apartment, "but flesh and blood can't bear to have such doings made nothing of. If Susan isn't packed off, nobody's safe. I knew his reverence here wanted to talk her off—but—I—I beg your pardon my lady, for breaking in, but everybody's character must suffer." Here the ancient dame, with her apron corner, carefully dislodged a small tear from either eye.

"What's the matter, Mrs. Pillow—what has Susan done?" asked the Countess.

"Stolen half-a-yard of lace from his lordship's cap," answered Mrs. Pillow.

"Not stolen—not stolen," shrieked a girl, as she rushed in, and with streaming eyes fell at the feet of the Countess. "I never had a thief's thought—never: nurse said 'twas of no use—none; and I only took it to remember me of that sweet child—I love it dearer than my own flesh—to remember it when I should be old, and baby be a man."

The girl, with clasped hands, looked with passionate grief in the face of the Countess. Her ladyship rose, and fanning her cheek with me—new from the Prince's coronet—said, "Send the culprit from the house, and instantly."

The girl fell prostrate on the floor. Mr. Inglewood followed the Countess with his eyes as, still waving me to and fro, she walked from the room. "God teach you better mercy!" he said in a low voice, and he stooped to raise the heart-stricken offender.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COUNTESS BLUSHROSE AND HER BABE.—SLAVERY OF ST. JAMES'S.—GARRICK'S "ROMEO."

"I BEG your ladyship's pardon—but will your ladyship's goodness allow a word with your ladyship?"

Thus spoke Mrs. Pillow, the housekeeper, following the Countess from the apartment; and her ladyship, by a motion of the head, implied consent to the petition.

"I shall never forgive myself, never, till my dying day," said Mrs. Pillow, immediately she found herself closeted with the Countess.

"What has happened now, Pillow?" asked her ladyship listlessly.

"Matter, your ladyship! Well, was there ever such a kind, forgiving mistress! I'm sure, my lady, I"—but here the growing emotion of the housekeeper broke forth in short, quick sobs.

"Another robbery, I suppose?" said the Countess, with affected resignation.

"By no means, my lady," answered Mrs. Pillow. "Now Susan's gone—not that she shall leave the house, my lady, before her boxes are well tumbled—I'd answer with my life for the honesty of all of us."

"Well?" said the Countess, in a fretful tone; and immediately the housekeeper knew she must be brief.

"But, your ladyship,"—and here the tears trickled down Mrs. Pillow's face like rain-drops down a window-pane—"when I think of my own assurance—my—my—my worse than that, in *busting* in as I did before your ladyship and my lord—"

"Well, well, see 'tis not repeated. I suppose it was your zeal for—"

"That's it, your ladyship, that's it. I thought if that hussy—saving your presence—only had the first word, for first words with a brazen face go so far—she might deceive your ladyship; and, like her impudence, she would come to you—but then, what do such trollops know what Providence really made 'em for?—Then I followed her, your ladyship,—and there she would stand in the hall, your ladyship, trying to cry, and aggravating me past Christian flesh and blood with her assurance—and then I—oh, my lady, character's such a jewel, and makes us forget what's

proper to ourselves and our betters." And Mrs. Pillow concluded this fragmentary sentence with a new supply of rolling tear-drops.

"That will do—no more—that will do," said the Countess, and her lips almost broke into a forgiving smile. Magical was their effect upon the housekeeper; for Mrs. Pillow wiped her face which, on the instant, was smooth, passionless and glossy, as a face of ornamental china. "Mr. Inglewood leaves us," said the Countess.

"I am not surprised at that, my lady, if Susan goes." Her ladyship, turning quickly round, bent a haughtily inquiring gaze upon her servant. Mrs. Pillow felt she had been too abrupt. "That is, I don't think Susan would have stayed long after him. His reverence once gave the girl a prayer-book, my lady; well, would your ladyship believe it, the wench was always a-reading that book? I always thought it strange, my lady; still I hoped it was nothing but religion. But when people turn thieves, and rob such a sweet baby—oh, your ladyship, what a darling, darling lamb his lordship is! So quiet too! I'm the worst of sinners, if he doesn't cut his teeth like any blessed spirit."

This energetic praise of the baby seemed to touch the maternal instincts of the Countess; for suddenly remembering that she had a child, she said—"Let his lordship be brought to me."

I would fain pass over the emotion of such a mother. The babe was brought; the mother kissed her child—kissed it as a nun would kiss her beads. Two or three minutes passed, and she was about to return it into its nurse's arms, when the fretful creature—it seemed wasting and pining, an offering prepared for death—threw out its tiny hand, and fixed its fingers in its mother's hair, whining and pulling with all its little strength. "Take him away," cried the Countess, with a slight laugh—"the —the little rebel!" and as the babe was borne to the nursery, the mother turned quickly to a mirror, and arranged a few disordered raven threads delicately, tenderly, as though they were vital as her heart-strings.

What knew such a mother of her child? She had heard its first wail—*that* inconvenience she could not avoid. It was from that moment divorced from her cares. It grew not beneath her eye, taking its hourly life from her; she never knew that sweet communion, when nature touches every nerve to tenderest music, still drawing forth new love, repaid by love increasing; by dawning consciousness; by looks of brightening knowledge; by fitful, broken murmurings, deep with a sense of brooding joy; by all that interchange of mother love and baby happiness; and more, by all those pulses of the soul which, in the thrilling present,

assure the blissful future. The Countess saw her child but at stated intervals; she knew she was a mother only by the clock. Her sole offspring was her beauty; that she nursed, that she watched, that she tended; that, with every furtive glance, she with deep affection worshipped. For her child, that was entombed in her face. It was this that to my thought made her hideously lovely—that threw the cankerous aspect of the witch upon the features of a goddess. Of all I have known, the Countess stood apart.

Whilst in the possession of her ladyship I saw all to be seen of the high world. Drawing-rooms—assemblies—balls—the opera—all the shifting scenes, all the beautiful and brilliant things, that make what is called society. I have seen true nobility of heart add lustre to the jewel on its breast; I have seen the man of birth, whose great ancestors were to him as continually present; whose memories were as protecting angels, denying aught of mean, or low, or selfish to approach the sanctuary of his soul; men with hearts and minds sweetened and purified by that everlasting fragrance breathing from good and great men's graves. And I have seen the caitiff whose stars and trinkets, like blazoned coffin-plates, glittered on nothing but corruption; men, with souls dead and noisome, in moving carcases. With indignation did I first behold them; with scorn and a fierce hatred. I called fortune filthy names, and arraigned directing fate of gross venality. This was the passion of very ignorance. Since I have seen the world in its many inequalities, have known and seen how much the selfish lose in what they deem intensity of gain, I have looked upon them with compassion—with a deep, mute pity. Poor small things, infinitely small in their imagined greatness; men who, like the maggot in a nut, feed and grow gross in darkness, unwitting of the world of light and beauty, without that petty shell of self that circles them!

I have seen too, woman in her sweetest, noblest aspect; a thing of highest thoughts and deepest tenderness, still elevated—made softer still by ministering tastes, almost refined away from earth—a creature priceless and unpurchaseable as the angels! Yet have I seen her sold—bartered; paid for with golden guineas—with tinkling title—with flashing coronet. I have heard something of the slave markets of Cairo—of Alexandria; tales of snow-skinned Georgians and Circassians—of fairest victims vended by avarice to lust. The tales were touching—very, very touching. But hearing them, I have smiled at the wilful ignorance, the smug self-complacency of Britons—I have smiled and remembered me of the slave-markets of St. James's! "What!" cries the reader, and his lip turns

slightly purple with indignation, "St. James's!" Yes, Sir, St. James's! I have seen blue eyes, pink cheeks, scarlet lips, sold—ay, as you would sell a nosegay—fathers and mothers having a bishop who shall bless the bargain. There is this difference between the Georgian and the British merchandise—a small circle of gold wire about it, no more. Have I not seen creatures with seraphic looks—beings that in real loveliness of form and aspect, in living harmony of gesture—have almost made the imagination barren; have I not seen them sold to some paralytic Plutus—some half-palsied earl? No—not sold; they were married. Their parents made for them good matches; they were married in a church—married with all the honours.

The bells ring out a merry peal—look at the bride, her colour comes and goes, and her lip shakes like a rose-leaf in the wind; tears blind her eyes; and, as she steps from the carriage, the earth whirls about her! Is that the church-door? Surely it is the entrance of a tomb. She fights with closed lips—mutely fights against her swelling heart. She raises her eyes—she sees her father's stony face glittering with a smile—a statue in the sun; beholds her mother's simper—her weight of great content; she turns—more horrible than all—and catches then the look of him, in some brief minutes to be made her owner; he smiles, and her heart dies at his Pan-like leer? Well, they are married! The bargain is completed—the receipt, a marriage certificate, is duly passed. The happy couple start for his lordship's hall. An ox is roasted—butts of ale are tapped—all is joy and rioting among his lordship's happy people; happy, too, the happiest of the happiest, is his lordship's self! What an excellent match for the bride! how many praise the wisdom—the policy of her parents! How nobly they "have done their duty" by her. Is it not proved by after years? does not her ladyship make an immaculate wife? Is she not chaste as Iceland snows? Can even midnight drunkenness dare to pass a jest upon her? Is she not a pattern of all the choice proprieties? True—very true. Her father and mother are proud of the match—proud of the spotless virtue of their daughter. And she is virtuous. She may, with most serene defiance, think of Westminster Hall; but what has her prudent father to answer, what her most politic mother to reply to that harlotry of soul they have forced upon her—to that inevitable daily falsehood which they have made her act—to that constant lie—that agonising ulcer eating in her heart, most eating when a smile is flickering at her lips?

Is she not a white slave—a Christian slave—a bondwoman bought in a St. James's drawing-room, albeit wedded after at St.

James's Church? I have heard of women slaves toiling in rice-grounds, heard of the planter's whip winding like whetted steel around poor woman's form: of these things I have heard. But I have seen white slaves in carriages—have known the agonies inflicted on them by the scourge of their own mind, by the worm preying in their hollowing temples, by the very quietude of their despair.

These scenes I mingled in—these things I saw whilst in the possession of Lady Blushrose. I have, however, trespassed by a long digression—have again committed my usual fault of wandering from the direct line of my story. Let me hasten to return to it.

Some three months after I was stolen—no, taken is the word—from the Palace, the Earl's infant, the heir of his house, fell ill, very ill.

"I am somewhat uneasy about Edward," said the Earl to his wife, who was drest for the theatre.

"I'm sure he's looking a great deal better—a great deal," answered the Countess, pressing her little finger to a beauty patch which threatened to fall from her chin. "But if you think it necessary, why not send for Dr. Wilson?"

"Madam," and the Earl slightly coloured,—"after your conduct to the Doctor this morning, I really have not the courage to send for him."

"Conduct! Was not the man insolent?—did he not accuse me of—"

"I fear, Madam, his great offence was—he told the truth," answered the Earl.

"Doctor Wilson is, doubtless, a man of the world—a shrewd man, and passes off brutality of manner, that some people may mistake it for the independence of genius. For my part I have no very high opinion of him. Did he not say that I should kill the child? The wretch!—kill it—because I had not nursed it myself? Has the man no feeling? Did not all my friends say that I should bring myself to the grave if I did nurse it? And you yourself, know my constitution?"

"Yes, Madam," answered the Earl gravely; "I have often wondered at its excellence—often, too, after the labours of the card-table at four in the morning."

"Now, do not let us quarrel. You shall not spoil my evening—that I am determined. I have made a party with Lady Dinah to see Garrick's *Romeo*;—I have not yet seen it, and really one might as well be out of the world. You might have accompanied me. I know the time,"—and the Countess acted a little pouting smile—"that to have seen *Romeo and Juliet* with *me*—ha! well,

well, marriage turns the poetry of hope into the very prose of reality."

"And you go to see Garrick's *Romeo?*" asked his lordship, sadly.

"I'm told it's delicious; so full of feeling!" answered the Countess.

"The carriage is at the door, my lady," said the servant.

"You will at least hand me to it," said the Countess, to his lordship, with a seraphic smile.

The Earl raised his eyes to his wife. Still she smiled, and held forth a fairy palm. The Earl sighed, and taking his wife's hand as he would have taken a thistle, led her to the carriage.

CHAPTER XIII.

DRURY LANE THEATRE.—A BROKEN-HEARTED WOMAN.—THE COUNTESS IS SUMMONED HOME.—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

THE Countess was in raptures with Garrick. Her friend, Lady Dinah, too, a widow of four-and-thirty, whose chief favourite in this life was her own broken heart—was softened to the extreme of tenderness by the passion, the energy, the enthusiasm of the little man. I have said it—Lady Dinah had a broken heart. Happy woman that it was so: for that shattered organ stood to her in the place of a parrot, a spaniel, a precious pet, to be fondled and fed upon the choicest morsels. It was this attention to the craving appetite of her broken heart that brought Lady Dinah to *Romeo and Juliet*. Sympathy was a necessity of her nature—but then it must be sympathy with the wants and woes of love. At eighteen she had been married to a nobleman of large estate, sixty years old, and a pair of crutches. The daughter of a fox-hunting squire, she had been legally sold to his lordship—vended to the winter-stricken peer, like any peach in January. She had been a widow only four years; her husband, with a stubbornness often peculiar to the ailing, determining not to cancel the contract a single day before. "And so, my dear, that is how my heart was broken." This was the constant theme of Lady Dinah; who would continually show her broken heart to her friends and acquaintances, as other women would show their china. It was, indeed, her only solace—her only comfort. Her face had in it frank good temper; her eyes were swimming in laughter; her lips ever curling with smiles—she was altogether a ripe, plump piece of frolic nature; yet to her five hundred

bosom friends she insisted upon being known as "a blighted thing; indeed, a disappointed woman with a broken heart." And then she would hint at the mystery of an early passion—of what in her girlhood she had suffered for a first love. This mystery was never cleared; for I give no credence to the vulgar gossip of her nurse, who, as I heard, declared that her ladyship before marriage had "never loved anything that signified, except green gooseberries."

The play proceeded, and with every scene the admiration of Lady Blushrose, the emotion of Lady Dinah, increased. "'Tis very nice," said Lady Blushrose at a part of the balcony scene.

"Nice, my dear! it's delicious," cried Lady Dinah, and for a moment spreading her fan before her face, she sighed deeply. Very different were the feelings of the two ladies. The one sat as a patroness of the poet and the actor — now and then graciously according an approving smile; the other was in the scene; was, indeed,—or assuredly tried to think so,—*Juliet* herself. "It's very foolish," said Lady Dinah, and with an attempt at vivacity, she brushed her handkerchief across her eyes, I do verily believe, thinking there was at least one tear in each of them.

> "Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say—Ay;
> And I will take thy word."

Thus spoke *Juliet*, and immediately Lady Dinah, in a whisper to her friend, exclaimed, "Just like me when quite a girl."

> "Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,
> That I shall say good night till it be morrow."

Here *Juliet* disappeared from the balcony, and Lady Dinah, throwing herself back in her seat, slowly shook her head, observing,—"If it doesn't take me quite to my father's orchard!"

"My dear child," said Lady Blushrose, looking round the house—"you distress me, you do, indeed, to find you thus give way to your feelings. You know it's only a play."

"Very true—I know that—but memory, memory, my dear! In this life we—ar'n't they the Clevelands opposite? Lud, no! I'm getting blind I think—in this life, woman has but one heart, and when that is broken—"

"To be sure. Why, there's that wretch Huntingtopper," cried Lady Blushrose, who, whilst sympathising with her friend, had carefully surveyed the boxes.

"He mus'n't come into the box—positively, he mus'n't come into the box. I wouldn't have him see us for the world,—where

is he?" Lady Blushrose immediately pointed out to her broken-hearted friend the situation of his lordship, who, on the instant recognising the ladies, kissed his hand to them, and left the box. "He'll never come to us," cried Lady Dinah, as though she expected a reply.

"No doubt he will—and why not?" asked Lady Blushrose.

"Oh, my dear—I quite loathe the man," said Lady Dinah.

"He's very handsome," said Lady Blushrose, believing in *that* she had said everything.

"But then his sentiments, my dear; so coarse—so little respectful of sympathy—so utterly ignorant or careless of the emotions of the heart."

A knock at the box-door, and, immediately, enter his lordship! He seemed a man of about two-and-thirty. His features were handsome—very handsome; in point of regularity, faultless. A well-formed, well-painted lamp, but with no light in it. As I shortly discovered, his lordship was the veritable Huntingtopper, the lordly master of Mr. Curlwell, whose generosity towards the little feather-dresser was so touchingly displayed in St. Martin's watch-house.

"Well, ladies, how do you like it? Garrick wants a little of the dash of a giant for my notions of a lover. He's mean—plaguy mean," said Huntingtopper, plunging at once into the play.

"Does your lordship measure hearts by a foot-rule?" asked Lady Blushrose.

"Not exactly—but then, one wants a sort of style in these things: when we talk of heroic poetry, of course, we want people of heroic look to utter it—otherwise it's nonsense, quite nonsense." Thus spoke the lordly critic.

"But altogether, what does your lordship think of *Romeo and Juliet?*" inquired Lady Dinah, with a downcast look, and in the gentlest tone of voice—yea, almost in the accents of a sufferer.

"There's some good things in it; can't deny that—very decent things in it; but then there's a good deal of stuff. Now, all that we've listened to about the fairy's coach—can any reasonable person make it clear? Come, here's the book," and his lordship read in a loud tone—

> "'Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
> The cover of the wings of grasshoppers;
> Her traces of the smallest spider's web;
> Her collars of the moonshine's watery'—"

"Silence in that box!" roared a voice from the gallery, and looking upwards, I recognised my old, honest friend, Luke Knuckle, Mr. Flamingo's porter. Luke, otherwise a peaceable

fellow, was too much interested in the fate of the lovers to pay any deference to any body in any box; and, therefore, almost unconsciously rebuked the talkers. His lordship cast a contemptuous look towards the audience, as though one of the dearest prerogatives of high box company—namely, to talk loud at a play to the annoyance of actors and auditors—had been most impudently interfered with. So indignant was his lordship, yet withal so defying of vulgar opinion, that he was about to continue the quotation, when a hurried knock struck at the box-door. It was opened, when one of the Earl's servants delivered a letter to her ladyship.

"It's impossible!" said her ladyship, with slight agitation, having read the note. Then, turning to Lady Dinah, she said, —"My dear, you must excuse me—I am summoned home."

"What has happened?" cried Lady Dinah.

"Oh, nothing; that is nothing, but his lordship's groundless fear—I will be back in a short time."

"Pray don't miss the tomb scene," urged Lady Dinah, "but what—what is the matter?"

"'Tis only to frighten me, I know—it can't be otherwise; but his lordship writes that dear little Edward is dying. But it can't be—he was so much better this morning. I shall be able to come back, I'm sure."

"To be sure you will," said Lady Dinah, with a comforting manner; and very willing to be so comforted, Lady Blushrose suffered herself to be handed to her carriage by Lord Huntingtopper.

"You'll have no cause to remain at home, I trust," said his lordship; "and till you return, I'll talk Shakspeare to the broken-hearted widow." As his lordship, with a peculiar smile, uttered these words, Lady Blushrose raised her fore-finger in playful reproof of Huntingtopper's intention. Ere, however, he could reply to this, the carriage rolled away.

Arriving at his lordship's mansion, the door was already open, and servants already watching the coming of their mistress. There was a sudden look of real seriousness in one or two faces; in others, worn as a part of the Earl's livery, for the occasion; a look that convinced me death was in the house. Mrs. Pillow was on the staircase, having descended at the sound of the carriage-wheels. She stood with clasped hands, pursing her mouth, and striving to look smitten to the heart. All she said was—"Oh, my lady! so sweet a baby!" The Countess slightly trembled at the aspect of the matron, then rapidly passed her. In a minute the mother was in the room where lay her dying child.

The Earl sat at the bedside. Never shall I forget the look with which he met his wife—the mother of his infant. There was no reproof in it—none—but the very eloquence of pity. The Countess was running to the bed, when the Earl arose and folding her in his arms, led her aside.

"He's not ill—not so very ill?" cried the Countess hysterically.

"Patience, Margaret, patience," said the Earl, with apparent calmness. "He may be better—but he is, I fear so at least, much changed."

"My dear—dear child!" screamed her ladyship. "He will be spared us?"

"Let us hope it, let us pray for it," said the Earl: "still we must be patient." He then led his wife to the bed-side; and instantly the grief and cries of the Countess were redoubled. She threw herself upon the bed, and called Heaven to witness how she loved her child.

"A letter, my lord, from Doctor Wilson," said a servant, presenting a note to the Earl.

"Where—where is the Doctor?" exclaimed the Countess.

"Be calm, my love; I sent for him—he sends this letter," answered the Earl.

"A letter! Why does he not come?—a letter!" cried the Countess.

"He will not come," said the Earl. "Listen." His lordship then read the note of the physician:—

"'My Lord,—It is with unaffected pain that I cannot feel it due to my professional character to attend your summons. After what fell from her ladyship this morning, I should forfeit all sense of self-respect were I again to do so. Her ladyship expressed a total want of confidence in my skill!'—"

"I never meant it—he knew I never meant it!" cried the Countess in a rage of grief.

"'Permit me, however, to recommend to your lordship, the gentleman who is the bearer of this. I have frequently met him in the course of my professional experience, and have great pleasure in herewith testifying to his high ability. I know no man to whose skill I would so readily entrust the health of my own children.

"'I remain your obedient humble servant,
CHARLES WILSON.'"

"Conduct the gentleman here," said the Earl.

"Is he a physician?" asked the Countess.

"The Doctor does not tell me, but I have all faith in Wilson, let the gentleman be who he may." As the Earl spoke this,

the servant ushered in an old acquaintance of the reader's, no other than Apothecary Lintley. The Countess glanced at his plain outside—for in the days whereof I write, the physician had a more marked exterior than in these one-coated times—and loudly whispered to her husband, "I'm sure he's not a physician."

Lintley, overhearing this, observed—"No, madam, I am not. Doctor Wilson has, however, informed me of the case; it is one I have treated a thousand times among the poor."

At the word "poor," the Countess looked toward her husband, as though, of course, he would instantly resent the insult. The Earl, however, immediately addressing himself to Lintley, said —"I am happy, sir, that my child will have the benefit of so much experience."

Lintley then approached the little patient: in an instant I saw in the eye of the apothecary the fate of the babe.

"He is not so very ill, sir?" asked the Countess.

"He is very ill, madam," answered Lintley.

"But not dangerous—nothing dangerous—you will answer for his recovery—of course, with your experience, you can answer?" cried the Countess.

Lintley did not speak, but glanced at the Earl. The father saw there was no hope, and endeavoured to soothe the mother, whose extravagant grief burst forth in the wildest expressions. She hung about the child, and vowed she would never survive it —no, she would be buried with it. She who had loved it so—she who had so treasured her dear, blessed darling! At these words, the Earl hid his brow in his hands, and groaned bitterly.

"Is there nothing, Doctor—nothing that will save him?" cried the Countess.

Lintley still evaded an answer; still the mother asked. At length the apothecary replied—"Nothing, madam—*now*."

"Oh, I know what you would say—Doctor Wilson has said so, but it was impossible. How could I nurse it—how could I, blessed, dear babe that it is,—but how could I nurse it?"

"Patience, patience, Margaret," said the Earl, taking his wife's hand. And so for hours they sat. As the clock struck six the child died.

And then again and again the Countess mother vowed she would be buried with her darling infant.

CHAPTER XIV.

I AM PURCHASED BY MADAME SPANNEU.—AN ILLUSTRATION OF HUMAN MOTIVES.

THE Countess being placed in mourning—such is the gentle, tender phrase that indicates the call of death at high houses—I was cast aside. Indeed, again and again before the Countess quitted London for Canaan Hall—the family country seat—I heard her vow that she would leave the world for ever. Existence had lost its only value to her; what was life without her darling child? Most vociferous was her grief; whilst the Earl, with calm, deep sorrow, would gaze at her, as I thought, with doubting looks. However, the day after the death of her child, her ladyship departed to feed her misery in solitude. She would henceforth employ herself among her husband's tenantry; she would visit the sick, the widowed, and the fatherless; again and again did she assure her husband that she would be quite a blessing to the poor! Hearing this, and finding myself cast carelessly by, I concluded that I, too, was doomed to a long retirement from the bustling world. In little less than a week, I found it otherwise.

One afternoon I found myself in the hands of Mrs. Pillow, who declared me to be, with other matters—gowns, and gloves, and cloaks, and shoes—her lawful property, by gift from the Countess. This declaration was made by the housekeeper to a short, thin, flauntily-dressed little woman, who evidently gazed at myself and my companions with the depreciating looks of a purchaser.

"There, Madame Spanneu," cried Mrs. Pillow, holding me daintily between her thumb and finger, "I call that a beauty. It's a bit of wirgin snow, and never been in my lady's head but once."

"La, my dear," said Madame, in a most affectionate tone, "feathers fetch nothing. Indeed, I'm the greatest sinner alive if all business isn't quite gone to the dogs."

"Talking about dogs, Madame Spanneu, how's your husband?" Thus spoke Mrs. Pillow; and though the reader may feel that the inquiry, dictated by a thought of the canine race, was scarcely complimentary to Monsieur Spanneu, it was nevertheless the result of association of ideas in the brain of the housekeeper; for, as I afterwards discovered, Monsieur Spanneu, Parisian born, was an enthusiast in poodles. They were to him as his own flesh and

blood. He was their "guide, philosopher, and friend;" though truth compels me to admit that he never hesitated to sell his pupils when he could obtain a purchaser. His fame, indeed, was widely spread throughout the fashionable world, and many were the declining maidens who owed the prime consolation of their lives to the delicate tending of Monsieur Spanneu. Indeed, as I once heard him declare, all his dogs were "dogs of sentiment."

"How is Monsieur?" again inquired Mrs. Pillow.

"Bless your heart, my dear," answered the partner of his soul, "nothing ever ails the brute. Ha! my dear, it serves me right —I would try to learn French, and I'm rightly served for it. That satin, my dear, is stained in three places," and Madame Spanneu pointed to the spots on a rose-coloured gown.

"Well, I always thought it odd as how you could marry a Frenchman," said the housekeeper, sinking the spots of a garment in the blemishes of a husband. "I don't think it's doing the right thing by one's own country."

"My dear, I had my scruples; but then he said he was a Count. What shall I give you for the lot?"—and again Madame jumped from thoughts conjugal to matters of business.

"Why, you shall give me—but we'll talk of that down-stairs; I've a little something, and such a glass of Madeira!" Saying this, the housekeeper hurried Madame Spanneu from the apartment.

An hour at least had elapsed, and I, with the other perquisites, was carried to the housekeeper's room; where I could not but recognise the potency of the Madeira. Mrs. Pillow's face was luminous; Madame Spanneu's eyes twinkled; and a gentleman, whom I at once discovered to be Mr. Curlwell, was chewing a bit of a song, in which there were "Chloe's eyes," and "Chloe's lips," and "Chloe's balmy kisses."

"Well, my love," cried Madame Spanneu, for wine had enlarged her heart, and deepened her ordinary terms of affection, —"well, my love, if I've any weakness in the world, it's music."

"That's me, all over," said Mrs. Pillow, with a slight titter, and as I thought, an oblique half-look at Mr. Curlwell. Whether it was so or not, that gentleman took a deep respiration, and again burst forth in praise of "Chloe."

"And when does Lady Blushrose come back, my love?" inquired Madame Spanneu, between one of Curlwell's pauses.

"Bless your heart, nobody knows. She's a going to bury herself from the whole world. Poor dear thing!" Thus sympathised Mrs. Pillow.

Mr. Curlwell, leaning back in his chair and putting his thumbs

in his waistcoat, roared over his neckcloth—"She'll be at Ranelagh in a fortnight."

"La! how can you talk so? And with that dear child upon her mind! To be sure, she knew as how it wouldn't live, if she didn't nurse it. Well, it's in Heaven," cried Mrs. Pillow with an air of satisfaction, in no way lessened by another glass of Madeira. "I don't know how it is: between ourselves, people haven't the hearts they used to have when I was a girl."

Madame Spanneu was about to press her lips to the glass: struck by this melancholy verity, she paused an instant: then, shaking her head with deep significance at the housekeeper, she cried, "They haven't," and tossed off the Madeira.

"The world's a getting still wickeder," was the opinion of Mr. Curlwell—"nobody now can trust nobody. I never thought much of the Countess. Some people says she's handsome: but she's not *my* beauty." Here, the valet looked dead in the face of Mrs. Pillow, who, with the corners of her mouth slightly curling—said "You're so partic'lar."

"Poor thing! Still, you know, my dear," cried Madame, "now the baby's gone, the Countess must have something to like."

"Try a poodle," said Curlwell; "for my part, I hate a house with babbies."

"Well, what a man you are!" exclaimed Mrs. Pillow, smiling. "But after all, people with the money of the Countess can't feel grief like us as are poor."

"They haven't the hearts," cried the valet in a loud voice, expanding his chest.

"With a good deal of money, folks can bear a deal of trouble, and be none the worse for it," said the housekeeper.

"Trouble does 'em good—teaches 'em who's master," vociferated the valet, and again he drank the Earl's Madeira.

"Still, my love," said Madame Spanneu, "I pity the Earl; everybody says, my dear, he's so much feeling."

"Not a atom," exclaimed Curlwell; his charity towards his superiors fast vanishing with his sobriety. Indeed, I have no doubt that the valet's firm belief was that all human goodness had for ever quitted the drawing-rooms of the great and set up its "everlasting rest" in the butler's pantry. Thus, he continued, "The Earl feel! Pooh! Crocodiles, ma'am—crocodiles."

"But really, Mr. Curlwell," said Mrs. Pillow, "what motives, as we may say, should his lordship have—"

"How do we know? Motives! Who knows anything about 'em? I don't trust to anything or anybody: if the Earl was to give me five hundred a year to-morrow, should I thank

him for it in my heart? No: and why not? Why, because I should be certain he'd some motive in it. Nobody does nothing without thinking of something." Such was at once the simple and enlarged philosophy of Lord Huntingtopper's valet.

"My dear Mr. Curlwell, I do think you're right. I'm sorry to say it: but something happened only yesterday at our house, that makes me suspect everybody; yes"—said Madame Spanneu, with emphasis—"everybody."

"Can't do better, ma'am," cried Curlwell, again quaffing the Madeira. "What was it?"

"Why, you know, my dear Mrs. Pillow, we lost our darling cat three weeks ago."

"Dear me!" cried the sympathising housekeeper.

"Well, my dear, about the middle of last week a woman—a very tidy, civil sort of body, comes to our house, and says to me, says she—Marm, do you want a cat? Why, my dear, says I, quite forgetting who I was talking to—I do. Well, then, says the woman, here's a sweet little cretur; and with that, she does no more than take a black kitten out of her basket, as she had under her cloak. There, said she—there's a little rose in June for you; black as a coal, ma'am; search it all over, for I wish I may die if there's a white hair in it. Well, my dear, I'm not superstitious; no, I should hope not; still there *is* luck in a black cat. So I says to the woman, you're very kind; I'll take the cat with pleasure: it's very good of you to have brought the cat. Don't name it, marm, says the woman; who would take no thanks at all for the matter. Well, I took in the cat, and the woman goes away. You'd see nothing in that, would you, my dear?"

"Nothing at all," said Mrs. Pillow.

"Cat was mad, no doubt," cried the charitable Curlwell.

"Not at all; as sensible and as well-behaved a cat as ever entered a decent house," averred Madame Spanneu. "But what do you think, my dear? Yesterday comes the very woman to me again. Marm, says she, I hope you like the cat? Very much, my dear, says I. You'll find it a beautiful mouser, marm, for I know its family. I've no doubt of it at all, says I. Well then, says the woman, since you like the cat so much, we can now come to business. What business? says I. Why, marm, says the woman, as I brought you the cat, you couldn't do less than let me serve it? Serve it—serve it with what? says I. Why, with cat's-meat, says the woman. Couldn't think of such a thing, says I, as I always feed my cat from my own table. Then you should have heard her impudence! Why, says she, calling me everything but a lady, I could have got the kitten a place in

a respectable family, yes, a place in a square—and you never could be such a fool—yes, my love, those were her very words—you never could be such a fool—could never know so little of life, as to suppose I'd give you a kitten, if it wasn't that I was to serve her with cat's-meat."

"Like all the world," says Mr. Curlwell: and here ended Madame Spanneu's chapter on human motives.

CHAPTER XV.

I AM OF MADAME SPANNEU'S STOCK.—GOSSIP OF GOWNS AND CLOAKS.—SHORT HISTORY OF A SCARLET-HEELED SHOE.

When I next saw the light, I found myself among the cast-off finery which formed the stock in trade of Madame Spanneu. There I was, in tolerably good company to be sure; but with fallen companions; with degraded silks: cashiered taffeties; expelled satins; velvets, thrust for ever from the society of the great. Nor was I alone—a solitary plume. There were feathers, thick as snow-flakes, upon Madame Spanneu's shelves. Thus, though at first I felt a sinking of the spirit—though, as I remembered my former glory, when I nodded above the baby prince, I felt a sort of sickness from the close, musty atmosphere about me, I soon became reconciled to my condition. Indeed, there was great jollity among us. For two or three nights—for it was only at night that the talk and fun began—I and my companions maintained the dignity of sulks. We were, however, speedily laughed into good temper; and then we ourselves laughed with the loudest. Every day Madame Spanneu added to her stock: thus, every night gave us fresh matter of enjoyment. We were wont to receive the newcomers as hardened jail-birds welcome culprits on their first captivity; grinning them out of their sorrow; jesting them into obduracy. Indeed, so hardened, so reckless was I become, that had I been selected for the head of even Garrick, I do not think—such is the infection of lawless company—I should have been sensible of the abasement.

I am not about to reveal the secrets blabbed by my companions; but this advice, my love for mankind—badly as I have been treated by the race—compels me to give. Never, gentle reader, so long as you have a stitch about your anatomy, believe yourself alone. If thoughtless people could only know what their left-off

clothes say about them, sure I am, they would resolve upon one of two things: either to reform their lives, or to go naked. Let no man harbour a black spot in his breast, and believe that his waistcoat is wholly ignorant of the stain. Let no man drop an ill-gotten guinea into his pocket, and think the poke unconscious of the wrong. His very glove shall babble of the bribe that has burnt his hand. His cravat shall tighten about his throat, if that throat be seared with daily lies. Ignorance of man! to believe that what is borne upon the body has no intelligence with the moral good or evil dwelling in the soul; to think that the purple of a Dives knows not the innermost arrogance of its bearer; that the rag that flutters upon Lazarus breathes not the sweetness of a May-day blossom. I know that people who believe themselves courageous thinkers, may call this a superstition. I will not argue it; but I will say, there may be worse. However, it is perhaps well for poorer men that the rich put no faith in such bigotry; for if folks were once assured that their cast-off garments could reveal all the deeds and speculations of the wearers, great, indeed, would be the man who could afford to give away an old coat! No: we might have even prime ministers and kings' conscience-keepers burning their clothes in their bolted bed-chambers, cautiously and secretly as a gallant burns his Paphian letters the night before pistols.

The stories I heard whilst on the shelf of Madame Spanneu made the white down upon me stand upright as the down of a thistle. How the gowns were wont to discourse! How the short cloaks would giggle with merriment! How the very gloves would lisp their little adventures! Nay, there was a high scarlet-heeled shoe—an odd one,—can I forget the story with which it would make every gown and petticoat heave and flap again with laughter, as it told—and we had the story with every newcomer—the curious incident by which, in a scuffle, it lost its fellow! This shoe was a very old shoe: it had been in the possession of Madame Spanneu's predecessor, flung aside amongst other odds and ends, and having for many years outlived the fashion, and being in a state of widowhood, had no hopes of returning to the world again. Hence, the great delight of this scarlet-heeled shoe was to prattle all the scandal it could remember, and, I believe invent, of the sphere from which it was irrevocably banished. Nay, often the shoe would receive a smart reprimand from a peach-coloured satin, which would declare itself ready to turn red at the absurd prattle of "the old wretch," that would extend its sides with laughter, mocking the censure. Then, I remember, there was a grave, long-trained pompadour that would continually beg to know what the scarlet-heeled shoe took them for; adding

that its fittest place, after what it had seen, or professed to see, in this naughty world, would be a convent, and to go the rest of its life down-at-heel in penance for past iniquities. At these rebukes the shoe would laugh immoderately, its high, glowing heel rapping, in a spasm of merriment, against the shelf it lay upon. The worst of it was, the shoe would never let any other companion tell its history: the shoe insisting that the narrator had, in the course of the story, determinedly omitted various matters which the said shoe, with more loquacity than charity, would insist upon supplying. There was, I particularly remember, a darling little smoke-coloured satin-cloak, trimmed with death-black lace—a beautiful, quiet, modest thing, that Diana herself might have worn of nights, when she slipped out to chat with Endymion;—well, the envious shoe would never let the smoke-coloured cloak tell its story. Five successive nights it tried hard to do so, but still the shoe would so pervert the motives of the cloak—would so minutely finish particulars, where the cloak merely intended a general sketch—would so insist upon Dutch painting, when the cloak, for reasons of its own, merely wished an outline of the faintest chalk—that at length, the patience of the cloak was worn out, and the tender little thing in a rumple of passion that astonished a very staid lutestring—a late Lady Mayoress by-the-bye—began to use its tongue so rapidly, and to call such names, that there was a general rising and shaking of gowns to smother the invective. I particularly remember, too, that a pompadour, with all the majesty of the court of Louis Quatorze, begged the smoke-coloured cloak, if only for the sake of other ladies, to remember that "there were feathers present." And then there was a sudden hush—and then a murmur—and then whispering sounds, in which, however, I clearly distinguished the words—"don't know where it may go to"—"wretches of men"—"amongst all sorts of people;" and then, for the first time, a sense of my equivocal position came upon me. I then felt myself as belonging to no party. To-day, I might be in the head of a chaste and gentle countess, to-morrow, in the hat of some masque-hunting, unprincipled gallant. I could not but acknowledge the prudence of the pompadour. I felt myself a kind of being of a harem; endured, but never to be taken cordially into confidence. I own the thought saddened me; but I was speedily drawn from myself by the loud, saucy voice of the scarlet-heeled shoe, who cried—"Feathers be fiddled! I don't care what they hear! So swear away, little smoke-colour; say your worst, my darling; and then let me try if I can't beat you!"

The cloak, folding itself in dignity, deigned no answer; and for

a time, there was a pause, only interrupted by the low, malicious chuckle, and witch-like snigger of the scarlet-heeled shoe. I hope, however, that without being treasonous to my trust, I have sufficiently warned my beloved female readers. Again and again let me tell them, there is peril in silk—there is danger in satin—yea, jeopardy in a bit of riband. When they are assured that cast-off gowns can babble—that cloaks can give tongue—that gloves may turn a secret inside out,—nay, that I have known even the tag of a stay-lace stab a reputation,—when they know all this, let them be the "silver lining" of the silken clouds that float between them and the world, and in the innocency of their thoughts, defy the gossip even of those who have most closely known them.

Ere, however, I quit this part of my subject, I cannot refuse to myself the desire of giving, in the words I heard it—ay, more than twenty times—

The Short History of a Scarlet-heeled Shoe.

The shoe speaks.

"Once upon a time—for I shall give no other register—there was born in the English court a beautiful female child. She was the daughter of a king's minister; but whether the first or the tenth, what does it matter? I have heard it said, however, that it was the minister (whoever he was) who first put a tax upon shoe-leather; for the which, if there be any truth in history, the punishment of corns was first sent down upon high people.

"This child was christened; and great was the revelry at the baptism. All the fairies then in England—for upon some huff or other the greater number of the good folk had quitted Britain, flying, like a flight of swallows, from a cliff of Dover, like the swallows no one knew whither—all the fairies who were too old to travel, and so were left behind, came to the christening; and according to their custom, as shown in many histories, brought an especial gift of goodness for the little suckling. One brought the voice of a nightingale—one the grace of a fawn. One the simplicity of a lamb—one the gaiety of a kid. And then she had all sorts of fairy clothing; with a good gift and a blessing worked in every article. In truth, she was clothed from top to toe from the workshops of the good people. She wanted nothing—nothing but shoes. They had been forgotten; and great—great was the sorrow of the fairies; for unless the baby were instantly shod, and that by fairy hands, it was doomed that the child should go barefoot all its life. Unseemly and most uncomfortable would this have been to the beauteous daughter of the minister of the

king. Everybody was in grief, and everybody asking everybody what was to be done: when an old woman, where she came from nobody could tell, appeared in the court, carrying myself and my little sister, both of us then of baby size. 'Here,' said the strange old woman—'here, an it please you, are the shoes!' But all the fairies cried out witch—hag—devil,—and swore by all their fairy rings, by moonlight, and by whatever else the good people hold solemn, that the babe would be lost, if suffered to wear the old woman's shoes. What, however, was to be resolved? Either the child must have the shoes then provided, or go barefoot. Now bare feet for the daughter of a minister of a king was not to be thought of—the child might as well have been born a gipsy-beggar. Whereupon the king's minister rose, and with a passionate voice cried—'Put on the shoes, put on the shoes!'—and immediately all the fairy-folk vanished with a howl; leaving the little old woman to fit her gift upon the child.

"Wonderful shoes were we; for we were no sooner on the feet of the minister's daughter than we became fixed as her flesh, growing hour by hour, and day by day, as her feet grew. And so we grew, and so we agreed, for about seventeen years. It was impossible that there could be a more loving pair of shoes. We were always whispering in each other's ear; kissing one another; and behaving with the greatest closeness of affection. This lasted for seventeen years: and then, I know not how it was, a sudden aversion arose between us—and, in the end, we never felt so happy as when we were apart.

"At length, it matters not how, I lost my companion, and the minister's daughter, in grief, in misery, died. She had received every good gift, but all was as nothing; what was each virtue under the sun, when a beldame fairy had bestowed upon her wrangling, slipping shoes?"

This was the story of the Scarlet-heeled Shoe. I heard it over and over again; but never without sounds of anger, contempt, or scorn from the gowns, cloaks, and stomachers about me.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADAME SPANNEU'S CUSTOMERS.—THEIR HUMILITY.—DOMESTIC PEACE AND PICKLES; AN EPISODE.

DURING my sojourn with Madame Spanneu, I had frequent opportunities of considering the various characters of her customers, who—I confess I was at first astonished at the discovery—were many of them most genteel and easy-going people; and, indeed, in their own esteem, a parcel of the very best society. Still, whatever was their bigoted opinion of their own worldly consequence, their visits to Madame Spanneu gave pleasant proof of their humility of spirit, inasmuch as they all came to habit themselves in the left-off garments of their betters. And this humility was the more christianlike, inasmuch as I verily believe that many of the purchasers would have gone to the stake in cast brocade, rather than have confessed to the meekness which induced them to buy it. They were, it is true, lowly of heart, but would not for the world have had the virtue made public.

How often have I seen the gown of a peeress carried off by the wife of a tallow-chandler! How often has the cloak of an earl's daughter been doomed to the shoulders of the spinster of two rooms! Nay, the Countess's gowns—the rustling perquisites of Mrs. Pillow—I saw no less than three of them sold to buyers, whose brassy looks and bold voices made me tremble for the future destiny of the garments. And can I ever forget the cold chill that struck through me when I once felt myself taken up by such a customer, who blew through me and shook me, and—my heart of pith sank at the words—inquired, "How much?" Madame Spanneu, with a just estimate of my virtues, asked a good round sum, and thanking my stars for my escape, I felt myself dropped from the hand. "Feathers, Jemima, darling, isn't the thing; no, my rose-bud, they isn't indeed." Thus spoke an old gentlewoman—dear Mrs. Gaptooth, as Madame Spanneu called her—to the girl, who desired to make me her own; but the reproof of the matron, though uttered in the calmest, most maternal voice, appeared by the very force of its sweetness—or certainly by some force—to convince Jemima. She sighed, pouted a second, then seemed resigned. "Gals of your tallness, Jemima, don't carry off feathers well; they makes you gawky;

and in this wicked world, looks is everything." I was quite charmed with the appearance—the manner of Mrs. Gaptooth. I thought I had never seen so venerable a woman; and even while she spoke of the necessary shows of life, she discoursed in so passionless a tone—seemed to have so just a value of all the fleshly vanities of the earth, that she appeared to me a kind of lay saint; a creature, doomed by the imperfection of human nature to eat, drink, and sleep, but at the same time never forgetting the passing value of mere mortal beauty, when most beautiful. "Ha! Madame Spanneu," the dear old soul would cry, "beauty, as I often says to my gals, is a flower—a tulip, Madame Spanneu; a painted tulip; now, a flourishing in a bed, and now on a dunghill." "True, my dear; very true—beauty" Madame Spanneu would reply—"doesn't last as it ought, not even with the best of us." "Ha! my dear Madame Spanneu, the beauty I've seen come on and go off—beauty! it's like a guinea, Madame Spanneu; when it's once changed at all, it's gone in a twinkling. That satin, by candle-light, Jemima, will be worth any money." And thus Mrs. Gaptooth—who was a frequent visitor at Madame Spanneu's—would discourse before her daughters, as I concluded they were, from the maternal tenderness which she would shed upon her mingled talk of the outward loveliness of humanity, and the glories, sold at second-hand, by Madame Spanneu. For Mrs. Gaptooth herself, I must repeat I had the very deepest respect. Charming, easy, loveable old woman; her eye had such a soft, half-slumbering look; her voice came like the gentle breathing of a flute; she always walked as if she trod a church-floor, and seemed fed on nothing coarser than marmalade and honey. As for her numerous family of daughters, I must confess I have often wished they had been a little more like their mother, for they, it must be said, were too often loud, self-willed, and frolicsome. But be it understood once and for all, that I write from the impressions of characters and scenes as they at the time fell upon me.

Mrs. Gaptooth on one of her visits came alone. Madame Spanneu, who was always with us, received the dear old creature in her show-room. One of Madame's young women—for there were two or three assistant seamstresses in the house—was present; and the conversation was carried on between Madame and her visitor in so low a voice that I could only catch here and there a few words. I was convinced, however, that Mrs. Gaptooth spoke of Lord Huntingtopper with the air and manner of an acquaintance. "There's no accounting for taste, Madame Spanneu," said Mrs. Gaptooth in a somewhat piteous voice, "but where she's got to, I'm a sinner if I know." "And you've come

to tell his lordship as much, my dear?" "Certainly not, Madame Spanneu. Lord Huntingtopper's coming here to-day to see your husband—Mr. Curlwell told me as much—so I'm come just to throw myself promiscuously into his way, that I may know a little more about the business. One can't be too safe."

Thus much I could piece out from the low-voiced colloquy of the ladies. Madame Spanneu, was, however, fidgetty under the restraint of a third person, and so told the young woman to go down stairs, and see that those nasty dogs did no mischief. The girl being gone upon her delicate mission, Madame Spanneu talked freely. "Well, I did hear that Lord Huntingtopper was going to marry Lady Dinah Willoughby."

"What of that, my dear? Why shouldn't he? But after all," said Mrs. Gaptooth in her mild, matronlike way, "who knows if the fellow's serous?"

"No doubt of it," responded Madame Spanneu; "he must be in earnest, for he's bought her ladyship a poodle; Julien's teaching it all sorts of things. Ha! Mrs. Gaptooth, men are nice creatures they are," cried Madame Spanneu with bitterness. Charming, however, most charming was the charity of Mrs. Gaptooth, for she gently clasped her hands, twisted her thumbs, and a smile gilding her broad quiet face, she cried—"Poor fellows! silly things!" and then she chuckled, gently chuckled.

"Don't talk in that way, my love," said Madame Spanneu, "it makes my flesh crawl to hear you pity 'em; it isn't standing up for your sex. Ha! you don't know what I've to suffer."

"Anything new?" asked Mrs. Gaptooth, with that peculiar serenity which characterises the interest of some people in the misfortunes of their neighbours.

"New!" exclaimed the wife, and she closed her eyes, gave a spasmodic shake of the head, and seemed to swallow a rising emotion. Then there was silence for a moment, and then Madame Spanneu, with an alacrity that appeared to do her heart good, cried,—"But, my dear, I'll tell you all about the villain."

I had not yet seen Monsieur Julien Spanneu, for his wife rigidly enforced his seclusion to his own room, and, as she would say, to his fittest company, his filthy dogs—his pupil poodles. I had, however, heard more than enough of him; and had formed in my own mind his outward man from the notes which proceeded from his fiddle as well as from himself: for really, they were so eternally blended, that man and fiddle seemed but one instrument. I have heard men declare that they have only to hear a voice to immediately fit it with an anatomy; albeit the fleshy instrument from which the voice is heard shall, in its

reality, be in every point a contradiction to the body which has been, by the fancy of the listener, bestowed upon it. I suppose this habit of men, not only when hearing persons but also when hearing of them,—this custom of endowing them with flesh and blood of some sort, arises from the difficulty that poor human nature has to consider mind in the abstract—to think of the human soul, without head and shoulders, legs and arms. Be this as it may; I had—from a too frequent overhearing of Monsieur Spanneu—made him a present of a long, thin, lizard-like body, a face sharp as a bladebone, twinkling eyes, grinning jaws, and a back bending like a willow in a breeze. His voice came with a cutting scream, far above his catgut. Hour by hour I heard him raving, stamping, singing, fiddling, at his canine pupils, withal so passionately, so earnestly, with such apparent consciousness of the importance of his function, of the great social value of his teaching a dog to go on three legs at the word of command—to limp as if wounded—to tumble head over heels —to feign the last mortal agony—and, above all, to toss a six-pence from its nose, at any given number,—that whatever might have been my opinion of the value of Monsieur's labours, I could not but respect the amount of sincerity, of real heart, he put into them. Then, how he would vociferate! How he would scream —"*Chien que tu es*,"—as if in his indignation he told the dunce of a dog a startling truth, and then as the gender might be, crying, "*Chienne que tu es*," as the worst opprobrium he could wreak upon a female learner. With these things fresh in my mind—for Monsieur Julien kept them day by day smarting like a new sore—I listened with all my ears to the coming narrative of Madame Spanneu, perceiving that—like a good wife as she was—she never felt so truly happy as when she could convince a dear female friend, who promised to keep the imparted secret locked for ever in her breast, what a villain she was married to.

When Madame Spanneu, as I have observed, promised Mrs. Gaptooth such happiness, the matron, decorously preparing herself for the pleasure, merely said, "Do."

"Well, my dear," begins the injured wife, "you recollect that creature, Louisa?"

"A very fine gal," answered Mrs. Gaptooth with some vivacity. "Beautiful flaxen hair, and eyes as blue as blue chaney. Where *is* she, my dear?"

This question Madame Spanneu did not answer, but waiving it with a real or affected shiver, kept to the story of her wrongs. "And you know, my dear, that I'm a little particular in my pickles?"

In the name of the mummy of King Cheops—certainly one of the best preserves of the earth—what can there be in common with domestic wrongs and domestic pickles? This question stirred me, but not Mrs. Gaptooth. She evidently felt there was nothing inharmonious in the matter; for had she been a statue made to speak, she could not with more tranquillity have answered,—"My dear, I do."

"I'm not a proud woman, Mrs. Gaptooth; no; my worst enemy, my dear, if I have such a thing, can't say that; but I'll turn my back upon no woman for pickles. No; if I can stand upon anything in the world it is my onions."

"Very true, my dear," was the corroboration of Mrs. Gaptooth. "But the gal?"

"Well, my dear, I was called to Leatherhead for a week, to see my aunt in the jaundice. She got over that, but she can't live long, my dear, and whenever she goes, there's something for us. Well, there was I, out a week from home, I may say, upon business; leaving *that* Louisa to keep the house. When I came back, there wasn't a walnut—a bit of cabbage—not a single onion, my dear, if you'd have died for it."

"And all with Louisa?" asked Mrs. Gaptooth.

"My love," cried Madame Spanneu, most affectionate in her wretchedness. "My love, I afterwards found out she'd been altogether—yes, altogether—mistress of the house; and so the wretch had not only destroyed my peace but devoured my pickles!"

CHAPTER XVII.

MONSIEUR SPANNEU AND HIS SCHOLARS.—I AM ILL-USED BY A POODLE.

Dear Mrs. Gaptooth felt for the double calamity of Madame Spanneu all the sympathy of a sister. The heart of the matron, upon her own grave assurance, bled for her friend; albeit, no woman ever sat above a bleeding heart with sweeter composure. "It's a bad world, my dear," said Mrs. Gaptooth, "but we're in it—we're in it, and must make the best of it." With this expression of philosophy, the old gentlewoman quitted the room, followed by Madame Spanneu.

I had that day been turned over and over by several hands, and had been carelessly thrown upon a chair, the price Madame

Spanneu placed upon my beauty being considered too extravagant by those who came to purchase. I confess it, my situation became irksome to me: I longed once more to be in the world: I had had sufficient of retirement, and yearned for society. Whilst these thoughts possessed me, one of Monsieur Spanneu's poodles frisked into the room. The little beast was a most mischievous and volatile animal, despite the daily lessons of a master to correct the vices of the canine constitution. He was never so happy as when gnawing the edge of a carpet—jumping up and tearing at the maids' aprons—biting the cat in the nape of the neck—and, in fact, committing every license within the wicked powers of puppyhood: a more irreclaimable little dog was never born to the luxuries of life. As the poodle entered the room I felt a strange shudder. He came in with a light, cautious air, treading on the very tips of his toe-nails, and lifting up his jet-black nose, as though he snuffed delicious mischief somewhere; then, in very self-abandonment, he chased his tail, spinning round like an opera-dancer. Then, tired of the sport, he approached a table with sudden seriousness, and staring full at a blue riband or cap-string, twitched the muslin on the floor, and in an instant buried his head, fighting it the while with his fore-paws, in the cap itself. Never did a dog seem more delighted—never was puppy so completely caught by a cap. At length, by the very force of his admiration, the poodle tore the cap into strips, and sated with that peculiar pleasure, looked round about him for another victim. It was but an instant, and I was in the poodle's mouth. That I, who had helped to decorate the Prince of Wales, should be made the plaything of a dog! I felt that my last moment was come—that my ignominious end was near. How the poodle snapped at me and tossed me! Then dropping me on the floor, he barked and barked at me; and then, after a momentary pause, he caught me up in his mouth and ran with me out of the room. In another minute, the heedless puppy, unseen by his master, carried me into Monsieur Spanneu's academy; for there was the Frenchman, kit in hand, playing the Menuet de la Cour to a couple of poodles, stamping, vociferating, swearing, whilst he played.

I have no doubt that the action of the Frenchman had sudden operation on the fears of the animal that had carried me off; for the dog crouched under a chair with me between his paws, now pulling me through his teeth, and now contemplating in curious silence the motions of his canine schoolfellows. I have little doubt, too, that a somewhat ponderous whip, which the Frenchman remorselessly applied to the backs of his students, had its due effect upon the transgressing poodle; for as the whip

cracked, and the culprits yelped and howled, the poodle trembled throughout every hair, and yelped in sympathy.

It was, however, delightful to witness the affectionate manner with which Monsieur Spanneu inflicted punishment on his students. "Ha! ha! *mon mignon*," he would cry, and the thong would wind round the darling's body with force enough to crack it. "*Viens, mon ami*," the master would exclaim, at the same time kicking the pupil to the other end of the school-room. The teacher divided his time between soft, endearing phrases and hard thwacks. His lips dropt oil, but his hand still bore a whip.

The poodle having left me beneath a chair, although I was somewhat flustered by the rough treatment I had received, I nevertheless soon recovered sufficient composure to look about me. I then noted, what I have since a thousand times remarked, the difference—even to extremes—between a man in his reality and a man as we may, in our imagination, have painted him. Here was Monsieur Spanneu, a short, obese Frenchman; yet surely never did man carry so much fat so lightly. He was about four feet six in height, with a face ample as the moon at the full, a broad forehead and bald head, its nudity half discovered by a nightcap half-slipped from its resting-place. Nothing could have been more ludicrous than the aspect and manner of the teacher, had they not been redeemed by an energy, a certain enthusiasm of purpose, that imparted to him something like dignity. It was impossible to laugh outright at Monsieur Spanneu; the earnestness of the teacher would repress the giggle of the scoffer. It is true he taught nothing but dogs; but then he convinced you that there were no creatures on this earth so worthy of teaching. "A dog," Monsieur Spanneu would say, "is de only true friend of de man," and this opinion the master would dignify by laying the whip about the only friend of our species.

Whether Monsieur Spanneu's pupils were more than ordinarily dull, or the master himself more than usually irascible, I cannot determine; but never during my stay in the house had I heard such crackings of the whip, such yelpings and howlings from the dogs, as whilst I lay unseen beneath the chair, a witness of the discipline of my host. Monsieur had arranged his pupils for a cotillon, when, after the sweetest evidence of temper on his part,—after the master had twenty times called to the dogs, "*mes petits*," "*mes amis*," "*mes mignons*," "*mes enfans*,"—after he had lavished upon them all sorts of endearing syllables,—he lost his benevolence, and seizing his whip, went in among the pupils and laid about him like a thresher.

It was at this moment, when the very tiles of the housetop were ringing with the howling of the dogs, and their master was raging like a tempest, his face scarlet, and his forehead streaming with passion, that Madame Spanneu rushed into the room, ceremoniously followed by Mrs. Gaptooth.

"Monsieur Spanneu, I'll put up with this nuisance no longer," cried Madame; and if ever woman looked in earnest it was the wife of the teacher.

Monsieur Spanneu was instantly composed. He stooped to pick up the nightcap which in his energy had dropped from his head, and folding it delicately, tenderly, between his hands, he suffered a smile to break all over his face, and bending with graceful devotion, he said—"*Ma belle Elise.*" There was nothing in the words. Any other husband might have called his wife his beautiful Eliza, but in the manner of Monsieur Spanneu there was the devotion of a life. Never was there such fealty paid to the wedding-ring. I saw it at once; the poodles, whatever were their sufferings, were fully revenged by the wife of their tyrant and teacher. The meekest, poorest dog there, was a lion in heart and independence before Monsieur Spanneu, compared to Monsieur Spanneu before his wife. Hence, the husband met the ferocity of his helpmate with nothing more than a deprecating bend of the back, and "*Ma belle Elise.*"

"None of your nonsense," cried Madame Spanneu,—that lofty-minded woman rejecting what the weakness of her sex might have deemed a compliment. "I won't have my house turned into a kennel any longer. The dogs shall pack; and all the better if their master packs with them."

"*Mon ange!*" cried Monsieur Spanneu, his meekness, if possible, increasing with the violence of his wife.

"Yes, you're a pretty fellow to call anybody your angel, you are; I'm none of your angels, I can tell you,"—exclaimed Madame Spanneu, with a vigorous tossing of the head.

"Now, my dear," said Mrs. Gaptooth, apparently from the best spirit in the world, "now, don't go on so—though, to be sure, so many dogs must put any house in a most terrible pickle."

"Pickle!" cried Madame Spanneu, with intense shrillness of organ: "pickle!"

"*Ma chère,*" said the husband with a lost look, as though that one word pickle had conjured about him a throng of terrors which he felt it was in vain to struggle with. Had Madame Spanneu not been the poor man's wife, she must have pitied him; as it was; pity was the last feeling to be wasted on the destroyer.

"Pickle!" for the third time screamed Madame Spanneu, and I could perceive as she moved from the door, that her husband

shifted himself, preparing to make a retreat. "I wonder that the floor doesn't open and swallow you at the word," she cried.

"*Ma belle Elise!*" said the Frenchman, but he spoke in vain.

"I wonder that you can have the impudence to exist—you, that I have given house and home to—you that I harbour, with your filthy curs—you that—"

The Frenchman was about to fly, when casting his eye about, he observed me lying tumbled and bitten beneath the chair. The poor man turned ghastly pale when he saw me. He was at once assured of the ill behaviour of one of his dogs, and of the increased abuse that must fall upon him, should his wife discover the accident. He must suffer anything, rather than permit the chance of such disclosure: hence, with false courage, he approached the chair beneath which I lay, and seating himself, so arranged his legs as to keep me out of sight.

And then Madame Spanneu began again to abuse her husband, whilst he—poor man!—began to tune his fiddle. Again did the wife call out, "False, vile wretch!—miserable Frenchman!" whilst the Gaul, affecting philosophy, drew his bow, and sang—"*Nous n'avons qu'un temps à vivre.*"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HUSBAND'S WRONGS.—A LISTENER.—AN ATTACK.—TRIUMPH OF COLOURS.

And still did Madame Spanneu exercise her voice to her husband's fiddle, albeit little mollified by the conjugal cat-gut. Orpheus—it is a trite tale—tamed lionesses by the magic of the gamut. Monsieur Julien Spanneu was not an Orpheus; neither was his beautiful Eliza a lioness; hence the discord and the music continued for some minutes, and threatened to endure, when the maid jigged into the room, and announced the name of Mr. Curlwell. At the sound, Mrs. Gaptooth observed in a confidential voice to Madame Spanneu,—"From my lord, I'm bound for him," and hastened away to seek the valet. "Come for Lady Dinah's dog, I'll be sworn," cried Madame Spanneu, with a fiery glance at her husband, "and you're never in a state to see anybody. How the man sits! Why don't you run and clean yourself, you outlandish savage?"

"*Ma belle Elise!*" cried the Frenchman, sitting cross-legged before me, with a shuddering dread of my discovery.

"Why don't you get up?" shrieked the wife.

Monsieur Spanneu affected a sudden spasm—worked his nether jaw, moped and mowed like a monkey, and then ventured to ask his wife if she had no sentiment?

"Sentiment!" echoed the beautiful Eliza, as though insulted.

"*Mon ange*,—I am sick—*malade—horriblement malade. Alles chercher du cognac*—oh! if you have religion, get brandy:" and the Frenchman ground his teeth, and, rocking from side to side, with both his arms hugged his abdomen.

"Brandy!" exclaimed the wife, with mixed contempt and derision at the extravagance of the sick man, and was about to leave the room. This was precisely what the husband wanted: he therefore sought to hurry her with sweetest phrase. "*Ha! C'est bien, ma vie—mon trésor—mon âme.*" Then seeing his wife suddenly fixed, he roared—"Get brandy, or I will die—I tell you, *belle Elise*, I will die."

"Do you promise?" inquired the wife, with evident interest in the question; and then, with a laugh, she swept away from the moribund man. For an instant the sufferer sat listening to the footsteps of his spouse descending the stairs, and then he jumped up, and plucking me, rumpled and disordered, from beneath the chair—cried "*Ha! si cette diablesse vous avait vue!*" Saying this, he rapidly buttoned me under his waistcoat, and again fell in the chair—again sick, expiring for the life-bestowing brandy. He listened, but there was no wife hurrying back with the restorative anodyne. Yet, certainly, she would come—yes, she would never let him expire. That was her rushing step. No; it was the cat at romps. Had he not promised to die if brandy came not? Still silence? It was plain the wretched woman wished to try if he would keep his word. Smitten with a sense of this truth, the mournful spouse rose from his chair, and drawing forth his handkerchief, was about to use it in search of a tear of wounded sensibility, a tear that might be in his eye. He hesitated, and the majesty of an offended husband coming to his aid, he exclaimed—I cannot for a certainty say what, but sure I am, it was not "*Ange.*" Whatever it was, the word by its energy seemed to carry the man from the room, and he ran muttering down stairs, carrying me as his bosom companion on the way.

I verily believe that Monsieur Spanneu, having descended his own staircase, was about to enter his own parlour; he, however, brought himself dead up at the door. I heard voices within; so, it was plain, did Monsieur Spanneu; for after pausing a minute, his heart commencing a hurried beat, he bent his ear close at the keyhole. I must confess that, for a moment, I wished I could

have been turned into a living hedgehog, that I might have inflicted on the bosom of the offender a thousand pricking reproofs of the meanness of the act. I could have curled and twisted like a snake with very indignation, as the Frenchman, grasping the handle of the door, seemed as he would screw the entire of his ear into the compass of the keyhole. How, at first, he shook and quivered at the voices within—and then, with an attempt at calmness, he set his teeth and slightly grunted as he listened! Nevertheless, with all his industry and quickness of ear, Monsieur Spanneu was only enabled to catch half-sentences; these he pieced together, making thereof a terrible scourge by the very ingenuity of his ignorance. I, having the acute organisation of a bird, could recognise sounds of softest volume, and was, therefore, excessively amused at the jealousy which Monsieur gathered from the mere fragments he was enabled to put together.

Requesting that the printer will set in different letters—will, if I may use the conceit, put certain words in a whisper—I will endeavour to show what Monsieur Spanneu heard, and what escaped him. The proverb that "listeners hear no good of themselves," is evidently worked out in this way: the good, if ever spoken, is spoken in so weak a voice that it falls dead ere it arrives at the keyhole. This was doubtless the case with Monsieur Spanneu.

"I never thought that his lordship could have so liked that Madame Spanneu,"—here begins the inaudible type, for words inaudible to the husband—("*to know all about her ladyship.*")

"But, bless you, he so loves her—so doats upon her; (*and as Lady Willoughby has a fine fortune, perhaps she deserves it.*")

The first voice I immediately recognised as the silvery property of Mrs. Gaptooth; the second as the masculine organ appertaining to the valet Curlwell.

"Well, there's no accounting for love, to be sure; and so his lordship comes here for a dog to show his love! Mrs. Spanneu tells me everything! La! how she grins at her husband—(*though, do you know, I think she doats upon him after all.*") Here the gentlewoman laughed: not so Monsieur Spanneu; for his rage rising, his knees began to knock against the panel of the door. Every moment I expected to hear a voice from the room cry, "Come in." The speakers were, however, too much interested to take heed of a light disturbance, so the half-lost dialogue, to the further misery of Monsieur Spanneu, went on.

("*I must say his lordship takes a great deal of trouble about pleasing her ladyship.*) Why doesn't he run off with the woman at once?"

"Why not? I'm sure she'd jump to have him: (*and as for*

buying dogs, and all such fal-lals—it's child's work, Mr. Curlwell; it is, indeed.") Here, again, Mrs. Gaptooth laughed; and again the knees of Monsieur Spanneu smote the panel. Almost breathless, the forlorn, self-tormenting husband again essayed to listen, yet heard but fragments. Thus the dialogue was continued.

("*But about that gal, Mr. Curlwell? If his lordship, as you say, is really in love with the widow, why should he care for that gal? You don't know the trouble she's give me.*")

("*You're an excellent woman, Mrs. Gaptooth, and I scorn to deceive you.*) I've only used his lordship, as his lordship's used the dog—as a sort of blind. (*He cares nothing for the feather-dresser; he's never seen her.*) It's I as loves her," answered Curlwell, and Monsieur Spanneu gasped again.

"Impossible!" cried Mrs. Gaptooth.

"Not that I can say, love; but you know what I mean. I don't know how it is—but I—I will have her, and there's an end of it," cried the valet.

"*Sacre!*" groaned Monsieur Spanneu.

"Well, I like a man of spirit," said Mrs. Gaptooth. ("*I'm sure I've done all I could to rummage her out. She went from her last lodgings, nobody knows where. There was a talk about an old pothecary; but I believe nothing about it.*) And now, Mr. Curlwell, why should you deceive an old friend? Why should you tell me it was his lordship as loved the woman, and not your proper self?"

"Good reasons, Mrs. Gaptooth; the world isn't what it ought to be, or I should have as much money as them as carry their heads among the highest. It's a wicked world for poor men, me'm," said the valet with a sigh.

"Well, well, the world's not so bad, after all," said the philosophic matron; "we may know a worse."

"*Je l'espère,*" muttered Monsieur between his teeth, and again with gaping ear he listened.

"But you're rich enough for her," cried Mrs. Gaptooth: "and it sha'n't be my fault if you don't make her a happy cretur."

"I will, Mrs. Gaptooth—I will, as I'm a man," exclaimed the valet with energy.

Here Monsieur Spanneu with a sudden roar burst into the room. He uttered no syllable, but with a spring brought himself to the fire-place,—to his own sacred hearth—and caught up the poker which, save himself—for at that moment he had dreadful thoughts of his wife—was its brightest ornament.

Mrs. Gaptooth, being a woman, slightly screamed. Mr. Curlwell in short spasmodic sentences inquired—"Hallo! The man

mad?—Murder to be done?—Blood to be shed? Brains to be knocked out? Killed like a dog?"—And uttered other household expressions of household alarm. Monsieur Spanneu felt too much to speak. "His voice was in—the poker." Seizing that weapon, he commenced an attack upon the valet, who, shaking many years from his heels, ran round and round a table, the injured husband—like Othello, injured only by false suspicion—following him. Mrs. Gaptooth, selecting the easy chair, sank in it, evidently prepared at any moment to faint. Still did Curlwell describe the circle of Monsieur Spanneu's mahogany, which was happily of sufficient area to protect the valet from the avenging iron of the short and corpulent Frenchman, who, nathless, ran round and round, making at times the hardest blows upon his own hospitable table, blows inhospitably intended for the brain-pan of his guest.

However, mortal breath could not long sustain the trial, and at length Monsieur Spanneu, gasping again and shaking his head at his imagined wronger, dropped the poker despairingly upon the table. At the same moment, Curlwell paused, and with his knuckles resting upon the same piece of household utility, took wind. There they stood, panting at one another, like two dogs in July on the opposite sides of a ditch. Seeing them powerless for any mischief, Mrs. Gaptooth then felt it her duty as a woman and a Christian—as she afterwards said to Madame Spanneu—to scream the roof off.

Down rushed Madame Spanneu, in full dress. She had, in truth, retired to her chamber to decorate herself for an audience with Mr. Curlwell; and not, as her husband foolishly imagined, *pour chercher du cognac.*

Strange, mysterious are the movements of the human soul! Arguing from common examples, does not the reader imagine that the very sight of his wife at such a moment would have been as oil to the Frenchman's jealous flames? It was otherwise. For in an instant, Monsieur Spanneu, crying, "*Ma belle Elise! mon ange! mon âme!*" locked his helpmate in his arms.

Now Madame Spanneu was dressed in a blue lutestring, trimmed with white satin. "Had it been any oder colour," Monsieur afterwards declared, "he vould have cast de *traitresse* avay—for ever avay; but dat gown vas his veakness. He could not tink to lose her ven in de vite and blue!"

In a word, the Frenchman struck to his wife's colours.

CHAPTER XIX.

I AM TAKEN TO A TAVERN.—LEFT IN A HACKNEY-COACH.

Our last chapter left Madame Spanneu in the arms of her husband. In less time than a leaf of this small history could be turned, the lady released herself from that sweet bondage; and that, too, with a decision that flung her helpmate, sounding, against the wainscot. Never did woman more vigorously illustrate the fallacy of that vulgar saying, that man and wife are of one flesh; for never was division more clearly manifested.

"My heart is broke!" exclaimed Monsieur Spanneu. That his ribs also were not fractured was a mercy and an astonishment. The husband looked entreatingly at his wife—there was no responsive glance—and, in another second, the wretched man had seized his hat, and stood the statue of despair upon his own door-step!

In that moment, active was the great fiend: for twenty little imps, the devil's footboys, rose about the Frenchman; some crying halter—some poison—some climbing his shoulder, and gently whispering in his ear, razors; and some again, with a sweet, diabolical smirk, pointing their fingers in the direction of the Thames. Monsieur Spanneu instantly resolved on death. What place but the grave for a broken heart? He would die: his only difficulty was the choice of means. Thus, hanging, poisoning, drowning, abscission of artery—one and all of these modes recommended themselves; but their merits appeared so equal, that the Frenchman was too much puzzled to choose. He at once broke from the besetting difficulty, by—turning into an alehouse. Distrusting death, he rushed to drunkenness. Monsieur Spanneu drowned his reason twenty fathom deep; but with wise reservation kept his clayey self safe from the coroner. Never was the inexperience of man so shockingly displayed; for almost before Bacchus could have winked, the Frenchman was disastrously drunk. This great evil was attributable to his temperance. He had never, poor man! taught himself the use of the bottle, and, therefore, the exposure of his ignorance was sudden and complete. He had been wont to dally with water, qualified with sugar, for luxurious tippling, and now stood he beside that burning Lethe — gin!

Have I not heard the story? Is it not Esop's? The story of a

stag, that drinking at the stream, still murmured at the shadow of its antlers? In like manner did Monsieur Spanneu drink and drink,—yet see nought within his glass but an exaggeration of his wrongs,—wrongs shadowed from false thoughts that thronged his head. Hence, the Frenchman—the gin distilling from his eyes—would drink and cry—"*traîtresse*," "*cocu*,"—"*cocu*," "*traîtresse*,"—and then, in the very idleness of despair, sing forth the snatch of some infidel song defiant of love, and satirical of wedded truth. Thus, the wretched husband passed with greatest facility through all the degrees of drunkenness, until he was in a state of professorial imbecility. He cried, laughed, raved—became maudlin, and then affectionate with his own hat, calling it "*Ma belle Elise*," then dashing it to the end of the room with new disgust; and then, some pause allowed, whistling—or spluttering a whistle at his foot, as throwing it up and down he swore it was his favourite poodle dancing a jig. At length, passion would shift no longer; and so, worn out, the poor Frenchman sat in his chair, a very skin of gin, and snored.

Let it not be thought that Monsieur Spanneu was solus. By no means. He played his various antics to the rejoicing shout of the customary visitors of the Horse and Anchor, many of whom witnessed the growing inebriety of a Frenchman with the same zest and curiosity with which they would have made drunk a monkey, a dancing bear, or any other animal endowed with certain powers imitative of some gestures of humanity. These true-hearted Britons, in the pride of patriotism, considered it something like impertinence, conceit, in a Frenchman to get beastly drunk; it was very like a liberty in a foreigner. Therefore, they manfully marked their censure of the circumstance, by filling the offender's pockets with soot, by blackening his face with the same substance—whilst an indignant wag emptied the mustard-pot upon the Frenchman's skull, telling him, to the glee of the party, that yellow hair became him beautifully.

These insults the Frenchman felt not—knew not. Gin had done its best and worst; and he sat, the world spinning with him—the breathing block of a man. He had, however, paid what was called his reckoning; and being incapable of swallowing another drop, the landlord of the Horse and Anchor—a humane man—thought it best to have the drunkard carried home: the sot himself having, in his frantic cups, published, again and again, the whereabout of the particular fireside where, in his own tragic words, he had been stabbed "in de vitals of his peace." A hackney-coach was called, and the Frenchman carried by the waiter and boots from the room, the

company therein roaring "Rule Britannia," as the foreigner was borne to the vehicle. "All right—you'll know," said the waiter to the coachman, the driver being very imperfectly instructed in the dwelling-place of Monsieur Spanneu. "A Frenchman—you'll find out," bawled the waiter from the steps of the tavern, and the coachman, with, as I thought, a fine faith in the doctrine of chance, persuaded, by dint of voice and whip, his horses to gather up their legs, and move funereally on.

How far we went I know not; but the day was waning, and it grew darker and darker; and the coachman—strange to say—more and more impatient. "Is this it?" he would cry, stopping at a house, and thrusting his head into the coach; and once or twice Monsieur Spanneu, deep in his dreams, would answer something which the driver insisted upon interpreting as a negative, and, therefore, bellowed an oath—asked himself why foreigners didn't stay in their own country—whipped his horses anew—and still went on.

In the course of our journey, the coachman stopped at three houses, insisting that Monsieur Spanneu was the master of each of them, and that he had nothing to do, but to get out, undress himself, and go to bed like a Christian.

My belief is, that Monsieur Spanneu had every desire to resign himself to goose-feathers. More, I am half convinced that—whilst in the coach—he thought he was at home, and once more smiled upon his forgiving wife. For he kissed, ravenously kissed, the tips of his own fingers, and muttered, "*Mon ange!*" Then, I am sure, thought he of his peaceful bed and of preparation for repose therein; for he unbuttoned his waistcoat, and I fell into the straw at the bottom of the coach. At this moment, the coachman roared some unintelligible words—the Frenchman grunted some unintelligible answer—and the coach stopt. With great alacrity the coachman leapt from the box, and thundered—knocker in hand—at a door.

"Gen'l'man drunk!" said the coachman, as the maid presented herself.

"Here's master again!" cried the maid.

"I wish I was in my grave!" exclaimed the mistress.

Hereupon, after some delay, a light was brought, and the maid came to the coach, and the driver was about to lift out his passenger, when the girl screamed out, "La! let him be—this isn't my master, but somebody else's."

Again the coachman was compelled to mount the box—again to drive on. Again and again he stopped; again and again he knocked at doors. Again he said, "Gen'l'man drunk!" the domestic published to the house, "Here's master again;"

and again the mistress thereof wished herself out of this most comfortable abiding-place, into her grave.

Even the patience of hackney-coachmen may pass away. This truth I learned on the third appeal to the third knocker; for the driver, on being for the third time assured that Monsieur Spanneu was "somebody else's master," lost all self-restraint—all philosophy. He roared like a satyr; and coupling the most disrespectful words with the immortal essence of Monsieur Spanneu, swore that he would cause that essence to evaporate to a very ungenteel and, doubtless, disagreeable locality, unless the Frenchman would instantly, and in the very best English, declare the house where he might lawfully and conjugally put on his nightcap. It was very strange; but the fervour of the coachman acted upon the drunken man like a bucket of cold water. For a moment, and a moment only, the soul of Monsieur Spanneu—or rather sense, for as pigs and goats may get drunk, the soul can have nothing to do with that very popular operation—came back into its proper place, wherever it may be, with all its wits about it, prepared to consider anything that might be demanded of it. I am sure that a momentary excess of reason may be wrought out from an excess of drunkenness; in the same way that a momentary spark, a fire, may be struck from out the cold, cold flint. Thus, when the coachman laid hold of Monsieur Spanneu, and with certain circumlocutory phrases, insisted upon a straightforward, and most direct, and most reasonable response, Monsieur Spanneu sat bolt upright, opened his eyes and mouth, and looking more sensible, and articulating the English language better than I had ever heard him before, made answer, at once satisfying the driver as to the truthfulness of his reply.

Dissatisfied is man; for no sooner had the coachman learned what he had been an hour and more vainly seeking for, than he uttered phrases very condemnatory of not only the intellect but the eyes of his passenger, and with renewed vigour, plied the whip. In a very short time the vehicle was drawn up at Monsieur Spanneu's door.

Again the coachman knocked, and the door opened; again he spoke, in tones as though he had brought some new luxury home —"Gen'l'man drunk."

"It can't be master," cried the maid; Spanneu never having before offended. She had scarcely uttered the words, however, when she rushed to the coach, and in amazement cried—"Why, missus, if it isn't!"

I then heard Madame Spanneu very distinctly wish herself in the grave. The coachman inquired if "he should bring the gen'l'man in?"

I heard not the answer, but the driver took the Frenchman in his arms, and carried him towards the house, leaving me a waif, astray upon the world in the bottom of a coach. The door still remained open.

"Men are brutes, my dear," said Mrs. Gaptooth.

"Lay him on the door-mat," said Madame Spanneu.

CHAPTER XX.

A HOUSE IN BLOOMSBURY.—I AGAIN MEET PATTY BUTLER.

THE coachman drove to his stand; where, with the patience of his tribe, he sat meekly awaiting another call. I heard a church clock strike ten; immediately afterwards, a sharp, shrill female voice cried "coach," and the driver instantly opened the door, and handed in a woman, who bade him drive to some street, for the name escaped me, in Bloomsbury. The woman, as it appeared to me, was under some strange excitement; for now she giggled, and now again she sighed heavily, and now she cried, "Well, well, he can't last for ever,"—and with that consolation, laughed outright. In the midst of this, she let fall her handkerchief, and stooping to feel for it, her hand caught me. How her eyes sparkled, as she held me to the window, and by the dim lamps in the street, scrutinised my shadowed beauty! "It can't belong to the coachman," she said; and immediately concealed me. From the brief glance I had had of my new possessor, I did not feel particularly hilarious at my destiny. She was a woman of about three or four and twenty, with an animated face, but withal a certain vivacious boldness of the eye, unpleasing to the sobriety of my constitution. However, she had taken possession of me, by right of discovery. I was, to her own satisfaction at least, her lawful property.

The coach stopt in a narrow, dark-street, opposite a mean-looking dirty house—a house with all the outward indications of squalor and disrepute. I may be fanciful, but there is a physiognomy in houses—at least, such is my belief. Sure I am, I have seen houses with a swaggering, hat-a-cock sort of look; whilst other habitations have seemed to squint and leer wickedly from the corners of the windows. The house the coach stopped at was of this kind; my heart fell as my new possessor gently struck the knocker. "You'll give more than a shilling?" said the coachman, with an affected air of wonderment. "A shilling

is your honest fare—and as an honest man you can ask no more," was the feminine reply. "Honest man!" muttered the coachman, as if the woman talked of something altogether out of human experience. "Yes, honest man!" answered my new owner, —who continued to press me closely under her arm, ringing honesty upon every note of her shrill, quick voice. At length, the coachman mounted his box in evident disgust at the gibberish he had been compelled to listen to; for his departing growl was "honesty," with no supplementary compliment to that very respectable virtue.

"And here you are agin, Mrs. Cramp!" cried an old withered woman, as my new mistress entered the house.

"And I hope you've enjoyed yourself?"

"Not at all," answered Mrs. Cramp, with sudden ill-humour.

"Well! that is a bit of beauty!" exclaimed the old woman, as Mrs. Cramp laid me upon the table. "How much did it cost?"

"Got it quite a bargain,—I may say for next to nothing. And how's your lodger, now?" said Mrs. Cramp, with an evident wish to withdraw me as the subject of conversation.

"La! what do you think? Well, wonders will never cease. It's only half-an-hour after you went away, when a gentleman comes here, and inquires about her. I thought there was some tale in that pale face of hers. Well, when he found out that she was the lost sheep he'd been looking after he went on like mad. He told me, as soon as she got well, he'd marry her, and make a lady of her—and more than that, putting a golden guinea in my hand, he told me to let her want for nothing."

Here Mrs. Cramp drew herself up, saying—"Mrs. Crumpet, I knew I was right! Though I never clapt my eyes upon her, I knew she couldn't be any better than she should be."

"Well, well, we've all our little faults," said the charitable Mrs. Crumpet. "But I hav'n't told you all. Besides the guinea, the gentleman went away, and in his own pockets brought back two bottles of wine; and told me not to spare it, for there was plenty more where that come from. So, my dear Mrs. Cramp, we'll take a little glass, just to drink the poor thing's health."

"I have no objection to wish the gentleman health; but as for your lodger, we don't know who's who," said Mrs. Cramp.

"Oh, she's a sweet, quiet little pigeon," cried the benevolent Mrs. Crumpet; and her thin, yellow face, shone with a smile like new gold. The wine was produced; the glasses filled, when a knock at the street-door called the landlady from the room. In a moment she returned. "It's only Becky; but she says Mr. Cramp won't be pacified with any lies they can tell him—he's doing nothing but screaming for you."

"Well, well, he can't last for ever," was the self-comforting answer of the wife. She then took the glass, and saying, "Here's the gentleman's health, whoever he is," emptied it. "Well I suppose like the girl in the play, I must take off my finery and be Cinderella again," said Mrs. Cramp, and she rose to leave the room.

"You'll find everything as you left it," said Mrs. Crumpet, who, during her mistress's absence called in Becky, and glorified her with half a glass of wine. "I suppose you don't get much of this sort of stuff with your master?" said Mrs. Crumpet. The girl made no answer; but gave a melancholy shake to her head; drank the wine, and heaved a deep sigh. "And has the old fellow made much of a rumpus?"

"He's been doing nothing but praying and swearing these two hours," said Becky.

"Well, Providence is very good," said Mrs. Crumpet; "there's one good thing—he's bedrid."

"That's the only blessing," said Becky, "for we *can* have the comfort of shutting all the doors and letting him hallo."

More conversation of this consolatory cast took place ere the return of Mrs. Cramp. At length she entered the room; but what a change! She had thrown off every vestige of her finery, and was drest with scarcely more pretension than the smutch-faced, blowsy maid-of-all-work, who had come to fetch her. "You'll take care of the things—and of that particularly," said Mrs. Cramp, pointing me out to Mrs. Crumpet.

"Like the apples of my eyes," answered the landlady with emphasis. She then took the candle, and preceded her visitor to the street-door. "Good night, my dear Mrs. Cramp; let us hope for happier days."

"Yes! he can't last long," again repeated Mrs. Cramp; and lightened by such comfort, I heard her trip quickly past the window, followed by Becky. Mrs. Crumpet returned to the parlour, and setting herself at the table, whereon was still the wine, divided her admiration between the bottle and myself. "Well, they ought to bless their stars as are born to such things," said Mrs. Crumpet; her heart evidently softening under vinous influence. She continued to soliloquise. "Ha! with such fine feathers, what a fine bird I should have been? And now—the Lord help me!—I lets lodgings to all sorts." Then, for new solace, did Mrs. Crumpet again address herself to the wine, which still increased its kindly operation. She took me from the table; shook me; blew through me; and then began to hum the songs of her youth. For some minutes she said nothing; but sure I am her brain was busy with the past; with the

glowing, radiant hopes which had faded into leaden-coloured realities; for after a time, she dropt me upon the table, and in a deeper key exclaimed confidentially to herself—"And now I lets lodgings!"

At length, Mrs. Crumpet rose, and placing the bottle affectionately under one arm, she carried me, a wine-glass, and a candlestick from the room, with, as I soon perceived, the intention of ascending the stairs. This operation, after some difficulty, she effected; and in due season I arrived at the door of one of the garrets. As Mrs. Crumpet opened the door—I know not how it was—but the candle fell from her hand, and was extinguished. With wonderful presence of mind—I might even say with an intuitive instinct—Mrs. Crumpet held fast the bottle.

"Who's there?" cried a low, gentle voice—the voice of suffering. Instantly I recognised it; a tremor thrilled me. It was the little feather-dresser, Patty Butler. "Who's there?" again she asked, in darkness.

"They *do* make such candles now!" cried Mrs. Crumpet; and she groped for the lost treasure, which with some difficulty she regained. "I've a tinder-box in the cupboard; for at my time of life I can't get up and down stairs as I used to do." Saying this, Mrs. Crumpet, with extraordinary facility, took the box from the shelf. Here, however, began a difficulty. Mrs. Crumpet endeavoured to strike a light; but by some accident neither flint nor steel would meet. Sometimes the stone jagged one set of the striker's knuckles—sometimes the steel the other. And thus Mrs. Crumpet sat and struck, and struck, but no spark came!

Oh, wine—wine—Bacchus—Bacchus! Here, in a wretched garret, with an old crone of a landlady, was thy subtle wickedness made manifest! How often does excess of wine prevent the spark that might otherwise have cast its radiance far around! How often has the genius, drenched with grape, done nought, when working hard to scintillate, but blindly strike his own knuckles!

"The rain must have come in upon the tinder," said Mrs. Crumpet, "and more than that, I've cut my fingers all to mincemeat. Well, well, people at my time of life oughtn't to do nothing. O dear," she cried in despair—"the flints they make now-a-days!"

"Give it to me," said Patty, "I am sure I can get a light."

"*You!* bless the dear child!" cried Mrs. Crumpet, and vigorously she struck and struck, until striking her knuckles past patience, she flung the steel and flint upon the bed where she had thrown me some minutes before. "Well, if you will

have your way, you must," cried the landlady, and she pushed the tinder-box, as I thought, towards Patty.

In a minute, Patty sat up in bed. Once or twice she struck the flint; then she was seized with a cough, which compelled her to desist. Again she essayed. Surely there was some truth in the saying of Mrs. Crumpet; the flint was bad—worn out; its fire quenched. Again and again Patty struck. And now the sparks come thick! It is plain, the rain has spoilt the tinder. No; it kindles! Patty—I had been thrown almost within a hand of her—blows the spark; the fire casts a red hue upon her face, but yet I see the change. How wan—how thin—how much more like her dead mother!

The candle is lighted, but the exertion has proved too much for the girl. She coughs and coughs; and exhausted, yet with such sweet mildness in her eyes, her face, she sinks back upon what her landlady would call a pillow.

I looked round the garret. Oh, God!

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. CRUMPET, AND PATTY.—CRAMP, THE CARD-MAKER.

My first introduction to Patty had made me acquainted with the gloom and wretchedness of a London garret. I was, nevertheless, startled by the extreme misery about me. The room was rather a nook, a hole for useless lumber, than a place for a human being. The landlady, a little woman, could scarcely stand upright beneath the slanting roof; the gusty wind shook the small latticed window, and entered through broken panes, defying the rags and paper thrust therein to keep it out. In a corner, on the bare floor, was the bed or mat; and there, beneath a web of a blanket, lay Patty Butler. Poor thing! After my first surprise, I took a sad pleasure from her wasted face: I heard sweet music from her feeble voice. They are changing, I thought; happily changing. A few more heavy days—some few restless, fevered nights, and that poor creature, dowered with the gentlest, purest spirit, will smile down upon the injustice and iniquities of a world that now casts her, like a useless weed, into its foulest places.

As I continued to gaze upon her, I felt a strange curiosity to know her history since we last met. There was something more

than the pain of sickness in her face. Was it shame? I asked; and immediately felt mean for the suspicion. Had her affections been snared by heartless device—or had she, secretly, nurtured a love that, in its very hopelessness, consumed her? Yearning for sympathy where the world would sneer and mock at the desire, had she, in dumbness, suffered that inward bleeding of the heart, whereof more die than coroners dream of? There was a sad story in that shrunken face. The history of the world is made of battles—conquests—the accessions and the deaths of kings—the doings of statesmen and the tricks of law. This makes the vulgar story of the external world. Its deeper history is of the hearts, even of its lowest dwellers—of the ennobling impulses that swell them—of the unconquerable spirit of meekness which looks calmly upon terror, and turns even agony to patience. A London alley might produce a more glorifying heraldry—if emotions could be quartered—than Poictiers or Blenheim. How many a man, whose only history is written in a baptismal register and undertaker's account, has conquered suffering, stronger in its onset than a squadron! If true magnanimity awarded knighthood, how many who want even shoe-leather, have won their spurs!

With these thoughts passing in me, I continued to contemplate the poor girl before me. She lay wholly exhausted by the effort of striking the light; whilst Mrs. Crumpet, with characteristic consideration for the weakness of her lodger, attempted not to disturb her, but with due self-preservation, fortified her own system with a glass of wine—with another—and another. This done, she spoke.

"Well, I'm sure, my dear, if you'd only have let me known that you had such a friend about you, do you think I'd ever have put you in this room? Bless you! child, what do you think I'm made of? You might have staid in the other apartment."—(This, I afterwards found, was only the next garret, but then the casement was whole; the bed was of decent flock; it had more than one blanket, and had the elevation of a truckle.)

"Thank you, this will do very well," replied Patty, with an effort: "very well—for *my* time."

"As I'm a Christian, you sha'n't sleep here another night," answered Mrs. Crumpet, with vivacity. "No: I promised the gentleman to do all I could for you, and my word's my bond. Well, if you don't remind me of my dear lost child, Maria!" Here the landlady wiped, as she thought, a tear from her eye, and again lifted the glass.

"What gentleman do you speak of?" asked Patty, with a concerned look.

"There! now, if I hav'n't blabbed; and I promised never to say a word about him! But he is a gentleman—a real one; nothing sham in him, my dear: and more than all, you've only to get well—and ha! ha! why you look better while I talk to you, and you've a colour in your face that a duchess might give her ears for!—Well, as I was saying, you've only to get well, to be made a lady of."

"Pray tell me—pray do! Of what gentleman do you speak? I know no one—no one, who"—and, excited by the manner of her landlady, Patty lay incapable of further speech; and her heart—I was sure of it—fluttered like a bird.

"Come, child," cried the gossip, "you're faint—only a little faint. I've brought you some wine; a glass—one little glass—will make you alive again."

"I thank you—none—none," said Patty feebly.

"But you must, my love; you shall, my darling," exclaimed Mrs. Crumpet, and she stooped towards the bed, with the bottle and glass. "There," she cried, filling—"and if I stay here all night, you shall, my angel, drink it."

Patty cast a helpless look towards the landlady, and then resigning herself to the necessity, raised herself in bed. She stretched her hand towards the glass, and already had the liquor at her lips. "Ha!" chuckled Mrs. Crumpet, "if the gentleman who brought that wine for you, could only see you now!"—Patty instantly withdrew the glass, and in a faint, yet determined voice, said—"I will not taste a single drop."

"But you must, my cherub," cried Mrs. Crumpet, with renewed vigour.

"Not a drop," repeated Patty, "until you let me know to whom I am to owe it."

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed the landlady; "that you'll know some day, and that shortly, if you'll only make yourself well and hearty. Come, drink the wine, child."

"No," said Patty, with calm purpose, and she placed the glass upon the floor.

Again and again, Mrs. Crumpet tried to prevail, but Patty was obdurate; she would not taste the wine until informed of the donor. This knowledge Mrs. Crumpet refused to communicate: let me, however, do the poor woman justice. I verily believe she would have hesitated not a second to gratify her tenant, but for one circumstance; she had not the means. She was as ignorant of the benefactor who had left the wine and money, as was Patty herself. She, therefore, with the cunning of an experienced gossip, thought she might guess the person of the stranger, could she only know her lodger's previous history. This she had often

endeavoured but in vain, to learn. In the present instance, she determined to make an indirect levy upon Patty's gratitude; and, therefore, resolved to impart to her the history of Mrs. Cramp in advance for Patty's own. To this politic end she bent her discourse.

"Well, my dear, I don't know if you ar'n't right. But who'd have thought that anybody so young should have such caution? Ha! if my good friend Mrs. Cramp had been like you! You've seen Mrs. Cramp, my dear?"

"I have heard you speak of her," said Patty, whose thoughts were plainly far away from the subject talk of her landlady.

"To be sure; I'd forgot—you've never seen her. Well, she was here to-night. She's been to a rout of some sort, and so she was obliged to come here to dress."

"To dress?" said Patty languidly.

"Bless you, yes; I keep all her fine things for her. You see, she's married to a man forty years older than her; and though everybody thought he was dying when she had him, he's only beginning to die now. Well, although he's as rich as king Solomon, he won't let his wife have a decent rag upon her. And so, poor soul! there's nothing for her but to cheat her husband right and left."

"Cheat him—her husband?" asked Patty.

"And as, by good luck, he's bedrid, why it's cheating made quite easy, my dear. The worst of it is for poor Mrs. Cramp, although she's heaps of fine things, she mustn't wear them in her own house. There, she must look no better than a cinder-wench; or else the old villain might go out of the world with malice in his heart, peril his own precious soul, and cut the wife of his bosom out of his will. Well, my dear, that would be dreadful, wouldn't it?" asked Mrs. Crumpet in a tone that peremptorily called for an answer.

"Yes," replied Patty, almost unconsciously.

"And so to hinder that, whenever Mrs. Cramp goes out, she comes here to dress, and then comes back and shifts her finery for her old clothes to go home in. That's tricking the miser, isn't it?" cried the landlady with a laugh.

"Doubtless," answered Patty.

"Now, here's this beautiful feather," and Mrs. Crumpet took me up, "she's bought it quite a bargain. But do you think she might show it to old Cramp? Bless you, she might as soon take a crocodile into the house. Well, thank goodness! the old villain has his reward. Bless you, his conscience must be as full of holes as a cullender. The devil's always at his bedside, that's one comfort."

"What do you mean? What crimes has the poor man committed?" asked Patty.

"Why, no crimes in particlar, as you and I should think 'em: only you see, he made all his money by making packs of cards. Now, in his old age, he's turned so shocking religious! You'd never believe it; but he thinks he's haunted by all the Kings and Queens he ever passed across his counter. He vows they all peep in and gnash their teeth at him through the bed-curtains; and once—you'd ha' died a laughing to hear him, for 'twas nothing but the fleas, my dear—once he swore he was bitten all over by the Jack of clubs."

"Poor man!" said Patty.

"Ha! if poor Mrs. Cramp had only known him afore she married! And that brings me back to what I was going to say, that it was so proper in you not to take the wine afore you knowd who sent it."

"Then you will tell me?" asked Patty.

"To be sure, I will, when you tell me how it was that you, with such friends, should ever have wanted anything. How was it that you came in such a pickle to me? Without a farthing—without a——"

"My story is not worth the telling—is nothing," said Patty.

"La!" cried Mrs. Crumpet, unconscious of the truth she uttered, "there's nobody as hasn't a story, if they knowd how to tell it. You must have had comforts about you?"

"I have found friends—dear, kind friends, in my worst afflictions," answered Patty. "When my mother died, and I was left homeless, I found a home."

"And why did you leave it?" asked the landlady, "afore you found a better?"

"Because I feared I caused unhappiness, where I would have given my life to have given joy. Oh, so good a man—so kind—with such a gentle heart towards everything!"

"Was he a married man, my dear?" asked the landlady.

"He was," answered Patty; whereupon Mrs. Crumpet looked suddenly very sagacious, as though by inspiration she had solved the problem.

"I see," said she; "you and the wife couldn't agree. The woman was——"

"Kind—excellent—most kind," cried Patty, with animation—"but weak and passionate."

"And jealous, of course?" added Mrs. Crumpet.

"I saw that my presence gave pain to her, and I left her house, determined, whatever might be my portion, to keep my hiding-place a secret from herself and husband."

"But he has found you out," said Mrs. Crumpet.

"Mr. Lintley?" cried Patty.

"And has brought wine and left money for you?" for Mrs. Crumpet immediately concluded that the stranger must be the apothecary. "What say you to that, child?" asked the lady.

Patty could say nothing. She was silent and in tears.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN INTRUDER.—A STOLEN WATCH.—PATTY IN NEW AFFLICTION.

"If it doesn't delight my heart to see you cry," said Mrs. Crumpet; "'twill do you good, my lamb—it always did me good when I was young. Ha! they don't make the bottles as they used to do!" she added, perceiving that all the wine was gone—a discovery which the wine she had already drunk scarcely enabled her to compass. "That's Mr. Abram," she cried, as a loud knock at the street-door rang through the house. "He's always in such a hurry! Good-night, my darling—go to sleep, and dream yourself a lady." Saying this, the landlady managed to pick her steps from the room, in her vinous forgetfulness leaving me behind.

Heavily the hours passed. Poor Patty! I heard her lips move—heard her turn restlessly in bed—moan and sigh, as though her little heart was vainly struggling with its sorrow. "'Twill soon be over"—I then heard her murmur in a sweet resigned voice—"very soon:" and then she slept.

How I wished myself in the hand of some good fairy! Some beneficent sprite, piteous of human wrong and human suffering! Then, I thought, should this dark, dim garret pass away! Then should rise a small, quiet nook of a place, nestled among trees, and carpeted with green around. And there a brook should murmur with a voice of out-door happiness—and a little garden brimming over with flowers should mark the days, and weeks, and months with bud and blossom; and the worst injuries of time be fallen leaves. And there, health in balm should come about her path, and her mind be as a part of every fragrant thing that shone and grew around her. And thus,—poor, wearied creature!—she should draw her daily, gentle breath, till ripe for heaven.

I had fallen into a delicious lull with these thoughts, when I

was startled by a sudden uproar, proceeding from the lower part of the house. There were loud, blaspheming voices—the shrill cries of a woman,—and on the following instant, the garret-door was burst open, and a man rushed in. As he did so, his head struck against the low roof, and he fell with a heavy weight upon the rotten floor, swearing and cursing with half-smothered passion, which it cost him a hard effort to control. "What's that? who's there?" exclaimed the terrified Patty.

"Nobody—silence—where's the window?" replied a voice, gaspingly. The window was in a second opened, and the intruder, I could perceive, endeavoured to escape by it. The aperture was too small for his big, burly anatomy, and there for a brief space he remained with his shoulders wedged in the narrow space, swearing and groaning—and then, on the sudden he was silent, and again and again I heard his hard breathing, and felt the garret shake as he strove to effect his purpose. The noise increased below, and coming steps and voices convinced me that the fellow was closely pressed. For a moment he paused, as to collect and intensify his energies for one last dreadful effort—for one gigantic struggle: another instant, and he had cleared the window. As he did so, I thought I heard a heavy substance fall upon the floor.

Almost immediately upon the escape of the intruder, the garret was filled with watchmen and others, carrying lanterns; Mrs. Crumpet, upon whom sleep and surprise had induced a beneficial sobriety, now bustling through, with a loud voice, declaratory of the wondrous honesty of her habitation, and of all the lodgers therein dwelling. Everybody paused at the window. "Abram's gone—the bird's flown," said a man, who, I imagined, was in higher authority than his followers.

"'Tis impossible, Mister Hardmouth," said a watchman; "a moral impossible out of this winder. Why, it isn't no bigger than a rat-hole."

"Ha, Snigs, don't you yet know what a man will do with Jack Ketch at his heels?" answered Mr. Hardmouth. "Well, better luck next time," said the philosophic functionary. "But I tell you what, Mrs. Crumpet; the parish of Bloomsbury will give you a taste of Bridewell, if you don't keep decenter people about you."

"Me! Mr. Hardmouth! I'm a peaceable woman, and never troubles my head with my neighbours. I'm a woman as pays my church-rates, and can look the queen herself in her face! My husband could have bought and sold you all,—every jack of you,—but he's in heaven." And Mrs. Crumpet continued to spin off this old, homespun sort of yarn with practised volubility; at the same time, as I observed, that she carefully covered a watch

which had fallen from Mr. Abram in the hurry of his departure, and which lay beneath the window. This operation she very adroitly effected; and then continued her self-assertion of punctilious honesty, the while with her foot she pushed and slid the watch close to Patty's bed.

"And who's here?" cried Hardmouth, taking a lantern from a watchman, and holding it towards Patty, who cowered and trembled, with blushes in her face that seemed to scorch her. For the first time, I saw within her eyes a look of scorn, of passion. Her hands shook together, as she appealed to the landlady, "Will not these men go?"

"To be sure they will—never fear 'em, my love," cried Mrs. Crumpet, seating herself upon the edge of the bed. "And if they won't, I'll never leave you; never, my darling."

"And so this is Mrs. Abram, is it?" asked Hardmouth. "Poor thing! Well, with all her husband's luck upon the road, he might house her better."

"She is no Missus Abram; nor nothing of the sort. Don't cry, child, they're brutes; a waking honest people in their beds. I should like to know when you're going?" asked Mrs. Crumpet of her intruders.

"When we've done a little more business. Off o'that, mother Crumpet; you and I are old friends, and ceremony's lost atween us." Saying this, Mr. Hardmouth—if justice be a woman, she ought specially to protect her sex—seized Mrs. Crumpet by the arm, and swung her from her seat upon the bed. "Now, my dear, where's the traps?" asked the officer with most familiar insolence.

"I know not what you mean—not a word; but leave me—only a few minutes, whilst I rise and dress." Thus spoke Patty; and for a time she seemed to vanquish sickness by the strong sense of her offended modesty. There was a look of command in her face—a look in which were lost the care and feebleness of an hour since. "I beg—I desire that you leave me."

"To be sure—leave us," exclaimed Mrs. Crumpet in treble notes, and imitating, though with shrewish awkwardness, the imperative manner of Patty. "How can we dress with men in the room? Are you lost to natur, you brutes?" cried the landlady.

"Mrs. Abram can dress alone," said Hardmouth; and so saying, he twirled Mrs. Crumpet from the attic, that lady loudly denouncing the brutality of all men. Nor was she content with this; for as she stood outside the door, she called loudly to Patty, telling her to show her spirit, and conjuring upon her true womanhood, not to rise for the best man as ever walked upon shoe-leather.

Patty, however, regardless of such conjuration, dressed herself with her best speed; nor did the multiplicity or cumbrousness of her garments very much retard the operation. Her offended feelings of maidenly shame gave her strength and energy of purpose. Sickness seemed banished from her cheek; and in its place there was a look of sorrowful dignity—a mingling of grief and elevated patience.

"Come, Missus Abram, you're not dressing for the Lord Mayor's show," called out Hardmouth.

"You may come in," said Patty; and she sank upon the one chair.

The watchmen and officers again entered the garret, and again with quickened looks did Mrs. Crumpet press forward amongst them, watching with feline eagerness the motions of Hardmouth. "I thought as much," cried that wary servant of police, as he kicked aside the bedding and discovered a watch. Mrs. Crumpet, in the vigour and confusion of her wrath, nearly bit through her thumb for her thumb-nail; the watchman laughed and chuckled knowingly; whilst for Patty, she sat unmoved, and seemingly careless of all that passed around her.

"The very watch as we had information of," said Hardmouth. "I can swear to the marks. But this can't be the only egg in the nest;" and with this wise saw, Hardmouth turned over and over the bed, Mrs. Crumpet all the while abusing him, and asking him if he knew where he would go to? She then nodded to Patty, and whispered, "Never mind, my darling, for this little mishap—your friend will see you righted."

"What friend?" inquired Patty, almost unconscious of the words.

"What friend? Why, you haven't forgot the wine and the guinea I told you on?" These words brought to the mind of Patty the kind, benevolent Lintley. The recollection was again too much for her. She looked about her—at the faces hurrying around her, and smitten by the remembrance of her past sufferings—by her belief in future misery—she hid her face in her hands, and wept bitterly.

"It's a bad job, Missus Abram," said Hardmouth; "but if people was only to think of being found out afore they begun, why we might turn Newgate into another playhouse, and turnkeys might go a-begging. Come," he added, "you must go along with us for this." Patty, aghast with terror—worn with sickness—looked silently in the man's face. She tried to answer him, but the words choked her.

"What do you mean?" cried Mrs. Crumpet in a screech, and suddenly trembling all over.

"Mean! Why, my meaning is as plain as Tyburn. This watch is stolen, and that girl—Mrs. Abram, if she is Mrs. Abram, and if she isn't, why she ought to be—why she knows all about it."

"I know nothing—nothing," said Patty, with a voice lessened to whispering, by terror.

"If you don't, man and wife is one flesh all the world over; and as it was your husband's bed"—

"I have no husband," cried the girl.

"Well, that's your business, I can't help that," said Hardmouth.

"No one—no one—I am alone in this cruel world—alone, with none but God to help me."

Here Patty was again convulsed in tears; whilst Mrs. Crumpet, infected by the sorrow, continued to weep, and cry, "If I had only known it had come to this!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF A HIGHWAYMAN.—ARRIVAL OF MR. LINTLEY.

The clamour raised by Hardmouth and the watch had had its due effect upon the neighbourhood; many of the dwellers thereabout having a most delicate, a most educated organ for the music of justice, or rather, of police. Hence, in a brief time, the house was beset by curious inquirers, anxious to learn the peculiar offence committed, whether it rose to the tragic dignity of murder, or descended to the sneaking littleness of petty larceny. Nor was it wholly curiosity that brought many to the door of Mrs. Crumpet. There were some, who, very justly indignant at the prying propensities of the watch, knew not where they might stop. "Nobody's house is safe!" cried one. "Waking honest people up in the dead of night!" cried others; whilst a few declared, upon the responsibility of their own invention, that one of Mrs. Crumpet's lodgers had murdered a bishop on Hounslow Heath, and with a heathenish contempt of religion, had pawned the dead man's canonicals. It was, however, very creditable to the general sympathy, that everybody expressed unbounded satisfaction at Abram's escape. Much of this I heard where I lay, as it sounded from the street beneath; and I confess my feeling of curiosity was awakened to learn something more of the fugitive.

It appeared, as I afterwards found out from the gossip let fall about me, that Clickly Abram was a mercer's man of rising reputation. He was young, good-looking, and, as the women declared, the best creature that ever broke the bread of life. Clickly, however, had this seemingly inborn prejudice—he preferred the bread of other people to the bread of his own hands. To this prejudice may be traced all the difficulties of Clickly's too short career. In the pursuit of his business, whilst measuring a delectable lutestring, he was shot dead behind his master's counter by a pair of fatal eyes, alas! too skilful in such mortal practice. Clickly's story is as old, as worn, as London stones. He was led step by step in silken chains to earn the iron fetters of Newgate. Mrs. Crumpet—I take the good woman's own avowal—had not the remotest suspicion of the highway profession of her lodger. No; it was a base, vile story. He always paid his way, and she would not believe it.

But I have left Patty wretched and desolate. She sat with a look of dreadful resignation in her face—a look that, for a moment, made Hardmouth pause, the while he rubbed his chin, and doubtingly observed, "If nothing could be proved agin her, why nothing could come of it. Though if she warn't positively Mrs. Abram—if she warn't really married to him,—why, perhaps, it might go the harder with her, because the law—though he never could find out the reason of *that*—supposed that a woman was under the authority of her husband." Having delivered this, the sagacious officer was about to raise the girl from her seat, when she swooned and lay like a corpse in his arms.

"You villains! you'll murder the poor thing;" cried a woman, a neighbour, who with others had crowded into the garret, and who, with this indignant cry, rushed down stairs.

"You'll never move her in that state?" exclaimed Mrs. Crumpet.

"She'll be better in a minute," answered Hardmouth; and lifting the girl, as though she had been an infant, he descended the stairs, followed by the watchmen. Mrs. Crumpet for a moment stood alone in the garret, casting bewildered looks about her—and then whirling round and round in a passion of despair—she caught me up, and rushed from the attic. When she arrived at the bottom of the stairs, she found the street-door open, and Hardmouth and his party about to carry Patty from the house.

"Stop—stop," cried the woman who had left the garret ere Patty was removed, "stop till the doctor sees her. As the Lord would have it, he was at a labour at No. 9, and—God bless him! —here comes the gentleman." After a moment, Hardmouth

turned with his charge into her parlour, and was followed by Mrs. Crumpet, who stuck me in a china mug upon the mantelpiece.

Another moment, and the kind-hearted woman, who had sought his assistance, showed my old acquaintance, Mr. Lintley, into the room. He looked cold and pinched; and I could not but observe that his great coat might have been thicker. There was an air of languor and fatigue about him; yet did the goodness of his heart, the gentle cheerfulness of his mind, sit triumphant over his looks, and he smiled as he asked, "Where is the patient?"

"Here she is, doctor," answered Hardmouth, pointing to Patty still insensible.

"Good God!" cried Lintley, and his face changed, and he clasped his hands and compressed his lips, struggling to master his emotion, as he gazed at the feather-dresser. "How—what is this?" he asked.

"Why, doctor, you see—there's been a little bit of highway robbery. Click Abram's the man we want—but the bird's flown. Howsomever, we found this in his nest, along with his wife there;" and Hardmouth, weighing the watch in his hand, nodded significantly towards Patty.

"It's no such thing," cried Mrs. Crumpet. "She's not his wife—she"—

"Well, that's not our affair," said Hardmouth—"as I've said afore, if she isn't, she ought to be."

"Stay—tell me," cried Lintley, and his lips trembled, and he cast a look of extreme pain towards Patty—"what is the distinct charge against this young woman?"

"Why, her husband—or as good as her husband—has committed robbery: we hunted him here, but he got clean off, leaving the girl in bed, and this watch with her."

Lintley, with troubled looks, took the watch from the officer. I then for the first time had a full view of it. In a moment I recognised the metal chronometer sold by Shadrach Jacobs to my earliest English friend, Jack Lipscomb, and beguiled again from Jack by the potent blandishments of Miriam. And now was Patty, poor, self-denying thing, by the force of circumstances, in the deep shadow of suspicion; now was she deemed the tainted associate of vice—its companion and its comforter. I glanced again at the watch, again saw upon its dial-plate the sea-tost ship, again read—"*Such is life,*" written beneath it.

"There must be some mistake; I am sure of it," said Lintley with emphasis.

"Very like, sir," answered Hardmouth; "but, you see, sir,

law has nothing to do with mistakes—law has nothing to do but to punish 'em."

"Leave her with me, officer—for a few minutes, at least. Some water," and the apothecary turned to Mrs. Crumpet. "Poor soul! she is much shattered—much changed; but she will soon revive—'tis nothing but fainting."

After many entreaties, Hardmouth, who expressed a sort of respect towards the apothecary—having heard his virtues extolled by several women who had thronged the door—consented to leave the room, Mrs. Crumpet adding the further inducement of the second bottle of wine left by Patty's unknown patron.

Lintley administered restoratives, and in a brief time Patty became conscious of the presence of her first benefactor. She blushed, trembled, wept, yet, in her excess of agitation, felt a strange comfort that, in this new affliction, her first friend was with her.

"Tell me, Patty," said Lintley, in a calm, sad voice, "how is it that I find you in such a place?"

"It was the best—the only place I could find shelter in," was the meek answer.

"Wherefore, and stealthily, too—wherefore did you quit my house? Come, I must know everything," said Lintley.

"You shall, sir, everything—as though I talked to my own soul, you shall know all;" and Patty paused as though she needed strength to proceed.

"Go on; wherefore, then?" asked Lintley.

"I was not happy, sir. Mrs. Lintley was not happy. I felt that my presence brought upon you disquiet; I felt that—God pardon them!—your kindness towards an orphan girl made foolish, thoughtless people talk, and it was my duty, though I should die, to go away."

"Yet, tell me," said the apothecary, "for I must trace you step by step—tell me, what could have brought you here?"

"I sought for work and found a little—a very little. Yet 'twas enough—I made it enough. I found, too, a kind person to dwell with; but I was persecuted, and"——

"Persecuted, child! By whom?"

"By a strange woman—a strange, old woman. Day after day she came to the house—I never went abroad but she followed me. I know not how it was, I felt for her a loathing I never knew for any human creature. I could not endure her. And then I heard strange stories of her; and so that I might free myself of her, unknown to anybody, I hid here. I had not long been in this house, when I fell ill—they told me, very ill."

"Ill, indeed," said Lintley, looking with compassionate eyes at the poor wasted creature.

Patty smiled, and with strange earnestness asked, "Very ill? am I not, sir?"

"A little quiet, with careful tending, and your health will now return," said Lintley.

"And I shall not die?" asked Patty, with sudden melancholy.

"Certainly not," answered Lintley; "you will be an old woman yet, Patty."

"God forbid!" cried the girl, her eyes filling with tears. "Oh, sir, do not take from me the hope which for many a day has been my sole comfort—which I have nursed, fondled, doated on—the hope of death. This may, I know, be a happy world; but, though young, I have seen enough of it. I have neither strength nor carelessness sufficient to struggle and live on as I have lived. I would wish to die. Oh, sir, indeed, indeed, I speak the truth! You know not how beautiful to me is death! What ease—what comfort—what sweet repose within a grave!"

"And is the world so barren to you, Patty?" asked Lintley. "Do not sin in such a wish?"

"Oh, sir, do not think me ungrateful. All your kindness I feel, past words to speak it. Your kindness in relieving me here—my landlady has told me all—your gifts of"—

"*My* gifts! No, child—not mine—it is the merest accident that has brought me to this house; where, in truth, it grieves me to find you. Hear me, yet a few words. I would wish to believe you still good—still innocent, Patty"—

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed the girl with sudden passion—"why should you not? What have I done—God help me!—what have I done?"

"Listen, and patiently. I find you in a house, nay in a neighbourhood known and noted as shameful. I came here to fulfil a duty of humanity—prayed and entreated hither to assist a poor helpless creature in her worst agony. It was well I came, Patty, or we might never"—here the apothecary's voice thickened, and he hesitated—"we might never again have met in this world."

"I bless the chance," cried Patty, sobbing.

"I find you, girl"—here Lintley paused, and then sadly continued—"I find you in deepest misery. It seems you are said to be the wife or worse companion of a nightly robber."

"You do not believe it—you cannot believe it"—exclaimed Patty.

"Stolen property—stolen by him—is found in your bed. Answer me, girl—for others you *must* answer—how is this?"

"Almost as much as I know, you know. I had fallen asleep; the door was burst in—the window opened—by some strange man, who muttered curses when I called to him. From the window, struggling and striving with terrible strength, he made his way, as I suppose, across the house-tops."

"A watch was found"—said Lintley.

"It must have fallen from the man, as he escaped," answered Patty.

Lintley approached the girl, and taking her hand in his, looked steadfastly in her face, saying—"And this man you knew not?"

"No," answered Patty, looking back the look.

"And you are as innocent of all this," said Lintley, his eyes moistening—"as I could wish you?"

"I am—I am"—cried the girl. "Oh, sir! You believe me? in this misery you will not forsake me?"

"I do believe you, Patty," answered Lintley, with solemn voice—"and so believing, I will not forsake you."

CHAPTER XXIV.

I AM REMOVED TO CRAMP'S HOUSE.—DEATH OF THE OLD CARD MAKER.

"Now, sir," said Hardmouth, putting his head into the room, "Now, if you please?"

"You'll never take her to the round-house?" sobbed Mrs. Crumpet, forcing past him. "You haven't the heart, I know you haven't?" and the landlady raised her voice to a scream, and wrung her hands.

"Be patient, good woman," said Lintley. He then turned to the officer. "This mistake will soon be cleared. Let one of your men call a coach; we will go where you please. Come, Patty," and the apothecary, with a comforting smile, gave his arm to the girl, and led her, pale and trembling, from the room. In a few minutes a coach drove to the door, and again whirled away. The neighbours departed, and Mrs. Crumpet was left solitary in her silent house. She came into the room; looked wanderingly about her; cried—"If I should hang her! Oh, I shall never know what sleep is again!" And then she went to bed, and lay till late next morning.

In the afternoon, Becky, Mrs. Cramp's maid, arrived with speed in her looks, and I was taken from the mantel-piece, and placed in a bundle of clothes to be carried from the house. "And

the card-maker's very bad this time?" asked Mrs. Crumpet. "Quite in earnest, now," said Becky. "Missus says it's a moral impossible he can live. Well, I say nothing, Mrs. Crumpet; but if she should have a bit of luck, she won't be long a widder." Mrs. Crumpet nodded assent to this belief, and Becky, strengthened in her opinion, departed; the landlady uttering no syllable on the events of the past night.

I was soon in the house of the old card-maker; soon heard the chirruping voice of his young wife. "You've got all the things, I hope, Becky?"

"Every thread, mem, and do you know, mem, I think we're in luck to get 'em. That's a wicked old woman, that Mrs. Crumpet, mem," said Becky.

"Perhaps she is, Becky," answered the charitable mistress, "but whilst the world's what it is, wicked people are sometimes useful."

"Pretty goings on in her house, mem," said Becky with a knowing look; for it seems she had heard a very imaginative version of the affair of the highwayman and Patty from Mrs. Crumpet's communicative neighbours. "Perhaps, mem, you didn't know that she lodges highwaymen and their wives, or worse than that, for what I know, mem?"

"Highwaymen, Becky," cried Mrs. Cramp, with a shudder, and then she added, with deeper disgust, "and their wives?"

"The man's got off—just like 'em, mem; and left his wife, or whatever she may be, to be hanged in his place," said Becky. "But that's like the whole *sect*, mem." The truth is, Becky, in the most unhandsome way, revenged her own inimitable ugliness upon the characters of men generally: they had never said, they never could say, a civil word to her, and it was her especial pleasure to malign them. "Yes, mem, crept out at the chimney, and left the poor girl, mem, with the watch under her bolster. Such a feller as that, mem—why, I'd hang him, mem—by the toes, mem."

Mrs. Cramp, with an exquisite sense of thanksgiving, merely observed, "It's a blessing I've got back my satin and this dear feather."

"Quite right, mem; and as master can't last much longer, why should you go out to dress when you go to church or to Ranelagh—when you can make yourself comfortable at home?"

"You're quite right, Becky, I won't be the poor trod-on thing I have been—I'll show a woman's spirit."

"To be sure, mem; and as master has made his will as he ought to do, why, mem, 'twill be your own fault, if you ever let any other nasty lawyer come atween you two again, mem."

It was evident that Mrs. Cramp was suddenly become very independent of the ire of her husband; for in the course of the day she carried her forbidden finery, of which I was no small part, into the sick man's bed-room. The patient was fast asleep. Mrs. Cramp softly approached the bed-side, peeping between the curtains; and thus, as she still held me in her hand, I had a full view of the old card-maker. His face was sharp and withered; and his nightcap, half removed from his head, showed a few short white hairs, like goose-down. I could see at once that Mrs. Cramp and her mate had been chained by a golden manacle, made at the Mint. The old man's face had in it nothing venerable: it was mere old age—mere decay, without that sweet, serene light, which gives to years a halo of holiness. The young wife looked at her sleeping mate in silence: and then, a deep, deep sigh broke from her almost unconsciously. She retreated from the bed-side, as the man awoke.

"Who's there? devils again!" cried the sick man in a hoarse, trembling voice.

The wife made no answer, but laying me and her other treasures upon the table, she walked on tip-toe out of the room.

"Who's there?" again cried the card-maker; and then he mumbled—"Devils—devils—more devils. And I shall go among 'em—I must go among 'em—no help. Damned—damned—ha! ha!—damned."

For an hour and more the old man raved, groaned, and muttered to himself. He had, as I heard, committed no peculiar wickedness in life; but his imagination had caught a disease from a spiritual counsellor, who, in the anxiety of his soul for the dying man, felt it a duty to convince him that he must be damned. He had dealt in cards; he had made gold by the devil's tools, and there was no help for him; the devil must have him. This comfortable assurance, Mr. Uriah Cloudy conceived it to be his Christian duty to pour once a day at least into the ears of the departing tradesman; who had such confidence in the authority of the Muggletonian—for Cloudy was said to be of that enlightened sect—that he gave himself up to inevitable perdition. Hence, to his crazed perceptions, his chamber was beset by devils, male and female; all of them wearing the faces, forms, and habits of the kings, queens, and knaves of cards; all of them, by such masquerade, torturing the remorseful spirit of the dying dealer.

"Oh! Ugh!" he groaned—"and there, peeping between the curtains—there's that cat, the Queen of Diamonds!" Then he sat bolt upright in his bed; and, throwing his nightcap into the room, he screamed—"Jack of Clubs, my time's not up—I defy you!"

At this moment Becky entered the room. "Here's Mr. Cloudy come to see you."

The name seemed to awaken new terror in the cardmaker, for he fell back in his bed, and howled like a wolf. In an instant the Muggletonian was at the bed-side.

"Why, man, that's right; howl—howl! It will do you good, poor doomed wretch; if anything will do you good. Ha! that's sweet music—sweet as the sackbut and timbrel," said the self-complacent Mr. Cloudy, as old Cramp yelled in a higher pitch. This spiritual comforter was a fat, squab man, of large breadth of back, huge legs and arms, and a big head, thatched with short black hair, and sunk between his shoulders. He had large, rolling, black eyes, a flattened nose, and wide dropping mouth, with the complexion of antiquarian parchment. "And so you've suffered, poor wretched worm!—eh?" asked Mr. Cloudy, comfortably seating himself in an arm-chair by the bed-side.

"Ugh! I *have* suffered," cried the cardmaker.

"It's a blessed thing," said the Muggletonian. "But you *have* suffered? Beware, beware that Beelzebub doesn't deceive you. You're sure you've suffered?—Well, then, thank God!"

"I do, I do—that is, I hope I do," answered the man. "And now, do you really, my kind, good friend—my dear, charitable friend—do you really think I shall be damned?—Are you sure?"

"Cock-sure," cried Cloudy. "Ain't you a wretched sinner? Haven't you lived upon perdition? Haven't you sold traps for sinners' souls? How many lost sheep have you sent before you?"

"But then, my dear friend, I was cardmaker to the court; and that may go for something—eh? Mayn't it, mayn't it?" exclaimed Cramp, despairingly.

"Don't hope it; quite lost if you hope," answered Cloudy. "Wretched old man! haven't you put snares into the hands of the wicked? Haven't you sold beggary, and robbery, and self-murder? How many precious souls are now roaring out against you?"

"True, true, true!" screamed the cardmaker—"no hope, no hope!"—and then he fell back and groaned. In a moment he jumped up again in bed, and with such new terror in his face, that he made his spiritual comforter leap up also. With an uneasy look, Mr. Cloudy pulled the bell, immediately answered by Becky. She no sooner threw a glance at her master, than she hurried down stairs, and almost immediately returned with her mistress. If you please, mem," I heard her say upon the stairs,—"If you please, mem, he's going mad again."

Mrs. Cramp entered the room, and to my amazement burst into tears. "Dear Mr. Cloudy," she cried, "is it come so near? Is he really going?"

"I have seen many things of the sort," said the tranquil Cloudy, "and I should say really going."

Mrs. Cramp wiped her eyes, and, approaching the bed, asked, "Joseph, don't you know me?"

Old Cramp looked at his pretty young wife, and, with a smile of imbecility, answered, "You're the Queen of Hearts."

"Poor wretch!" groaned Cloudy, "how he's wandering!"

"I'm going—I'm going—see, how they're all about me!—why, the counterpane's all tens of diamonds! And there, there at my bedside—don't you see him?—there's the King of Spades digging my grave—digging my grave! And now, now there's two of 'em on the quilt!" and the cardmaker roared, and his face became hideously distorted.

"There's nobody on the bed, Joseph; nobody at all, dear;" said Mrs. Cramp, feeling that she ought to say something.

"There they are," cried Cramp; "two of 'em. Two upon the quilt—here, right upon my knees—playing cribbage for my precious soul! Hush! that's the Jack of Clubs;—the devil—I know him; can't be mistaken in him! And there—that's the King of Hearts: bless his sweet face!—that's my good spirit. Ha, ha! he may win—he may win!"

"A dreadful sight, Mrs. Cramp," said Cloudy; "but now he's going. Comfort yourself—he can't last now."

"Hush, hush! they're at it. The King of Hearts has first crib. Ha, ha! the devil loses—the devil loses."

For more than an hour Cramp, in his madness, watched the progress of a game of cribbage played by his good and bad angel; and, with intense anxiety, looked over the cards, talking loudly of the fortune of the game. Now he advised his good angel in the laying out of his crib, and the playing of his cards: now he rejoiced and chuckled at his successes; and now spat and gnashed his teeth at the prosperity of his devil antagonist. At length the game approached its close; and Cramp sat with his eyes glaring and riveted upon the counterpane, resting his chin upon his hands, and, in the agony of his expectations, scarcely seeming to breathe.

"Hush," he cried; "there is but one hole a-piece to play; only one hole, and, with luck, I may be an angel yet!—Silence, I say; not a word—not a syllable. The devil has to deal—that's bad; never mind—silence. Yes, yes, that will do; never mind the crib now," cried Cramp, still counselling the play of his good angel. "You only want one hole, and you must get it—you must get it. Silence;—it's you to cut, it's you to—What! the Jack of Spades!—One for his nob. The devil pegs!"

And with these words the cardmaker sank back upon his bed, and died.

CHAPTER XXV.

A HOUSE OF MOURNING.—I AM IN GREAT PERIL.—A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAD.

I WAS in a house of mourning. That is, the shutters were partly closed; the curtains were drawn: the dressmaker had taken orders for black; and very dear friends were invited to a funeral. Becky, the maid—I honoured her resolution—struggled hard to look lugubrious, not at all comforted by the prospect of a new gown; whilst the fortitude of the bereaved Mrs. Cramp was an example to all newly-delivered widows. I protest I loved the woman for her honesty. The breath being fairly out of the body of her husband, that is, her husband by conjugal law, she neither wept, nor whined; never caught herself in a strangulating sigh; but wiped all defiling grief from her face as she would have wiped fly-spots from china. She looked more than resigned. Ere Cramp was screwed down, I heard her laugh lustily; albeit the practised Becky begged her mistress "not to go on so 'stirically; as 'stiricks wouldn't bring him back; and why should they—wasn't he in heaven?" Mrs. Cramp declared she couldn't help it; and from my heart I believe the woman.

"I was a good wife to him, Becky," said the widow, smiling in the very sweetness of conscience.

"When he was alive, mem, I always said you was too good for him; but now he's jest gone, it isn't right to say so. Still he *was* old, mem; that's on his coffin, so there's no harm in saying that. Nothing's wickeder than to abuse the dear dead, mem. Still he *was* old."

"He was," said the widow, with slight emphasis.

"Never could have been good-looking; but, bless him, dear soul! who'd blame him for that? Still he never could have been handsome," sighed Becky.

"I never heard of anybody who said as much. But what's beauty in a man, Becky? Nothing. Nevertheless, he wasn't handsome, God knows," cried the widow.

"And then we all have our tempers, mem, to be sure. For all that, mem, master was a little sour. Sometimes, as one may say, he'd bile over with vinegar."

"He meant nothing, Becky; nothing at all," said Mrs. Cramp. "It was only in our honeymoon, I remember—Ha, Becky!"—

here the widow slightly shuddered—"I shall never forget my honeymoon."

"Yes, mem—but you were going to say—what did dear master do then, mem?"

"Swore like any trooper, Becky. But sickness did him a deal of good," said Mrs. Cramp.

"Quite cured him at last, mem. And then—but it's a common fault—he did love money a little, mem?" and Becky paused.

The widow made no answer, but, glancing at her maid-servant, drew a long sigh.

"And what was the use, mem? You know he couldn't take it with him."

Here a burst of light animated the widow's face, and she cried—the monosyllable bubbling from her heart—"No!"

"I wouldn't abuse the dead for the world, mem; but people called him an old Jew," said Becky.

"He wasn't that, Becky," answered the widow, in the mildest, sweetest tone of reproof.

"But he did like to drive a bargin. He did love more than his penn'orth," cried Becky.

"He was a man of the world, Becky," said Mrs. Cramp.

"Ha! mem," said Becky, hardly knowing the truth she uttered; "if so many folks wasn't what they call themselves, men of the world, the world, mem, wouldn't be so bad as it is."

"I don't think the poor man left it worse than he found it," observed the man's widow.

"And then—if he wasn't dead I would say it—he used you like any Turk."

"It was his fondness, Becky; at least, I hope it was his fondness."

"Ha, mem, I've said it agin and agin, you was too good for him;" cried Becky.

My belief at the time was, that Mrs. Cramp had long been of her maid's opinion. However, she merely answered, "That's over now, Becky."

"It *is* over, and a good thing, too; for although nobody should speak ill of the dead—I must say it—a worser man never lived."

"Becky, don't distress me: come here." With this meek reproof, Mrs. Cramp approached where I was lying, followed by her maid. "'Twill be a thousand pities," said the widow, taking me gently in her hand.

"Quite a sin, mem, to do it," said Becky.

"And yet I must go into weeds," sighed the widow.

"All the better, mem; you do look so nice in black," cried the maid.

It is clear, I thought, I have been the subject of previous conversation, and mistress and maid are now discussing my fate. What was to become of me?

"A thousand pities to dye it," said Mrs. Cramp, still gazing at me.

I trembled at the word through every filament. Dye me! What! was I to forego, and so soon, the snowy purity of my outside? In the very beauty of my whiteness—in my excelling candour to be dyed pitch-black—for no fault of mine, but at the whim, the tyrannous caprice of another, to be degraded to the negro?

"And yet 'twill wear a long time dyed," mused Mrs. Cramp.

"Doesn't show the dirt, to be sure, mem," said Becky.

"Still it's a pity. Yet, I must be in black for a twelvemonth, Becky," observed the widow.

"You must, to be decent, mem," answered the maid. Suddenly, however, she thought of a probable escape, and added, "Unless you marry afore, mem."

"Before a twelvemonth! What do you think me, Becky? Well, Becky, we shall see," said Mrs. Cramp, laying me down again, and after a few moments leaving me in solitude.

The last speech of the widow left me in perplexity: for I knew not whether she had deferred the idea of again marrying within the year, or of submitting me to the dyer's mystery: whether she was again to speedily don bridal white, or I was to be immediately doomed to wear enduring darkness. I passed a time of restless misery. I am sure that I felt as a man feels, condemned by inevitable circumstance to be blackened for life, he himself no party to the iniquity. I felt the same anguish at the thought of losing my exterior whiteness; and being after a time used in fifty different offices for the convenient reason, that the dirt I gathered would not show. Can it be thus with men, I pondered? After the first dip and dye in inky guiltiness, do after-spots go with them for nothing? The purity of their white fame once gone, do they show no future dirt? Again I reasoned with myself. What! I asked, if I am no party to the pollution, shall I therefore despair? Say that to outward look I am made black as pitch, shall it be to me no consolation that I feel the same inward purity that I am black only to appearance, not black within? Such were then my musings. I have since learned to look on some men with all their faults, as sometimes little more than feathers in the hands of the dyer.

About ten days had elapsed from the death of the old card-maker, and I had begun to think myself forgotten by his widow, *when she* took me from a drawer, and carried me down stairs.

I might narrate much gossip of which I was ear-witness, respecting the solemnity of the funeral, with the tea and very hospitable supper given on the lamentable occasion. All this I pass over. Mrs. Cramp—I must own as much—wore her widow's weeds as though she was proud of them. Many of her female friends assured her that she never looked better, whilst to one or two she confessed that, to her surprise, she never felt so.

When Mrs. Cramp had descended to the parlour, I trembled, for there was Becky, plainly prepared for some mission. After all, I thought, are they going to dye me?

"And now, Becky, you will take the feather to"—

A peremptory knock at the street-door mutilated Mrs. Cramp's sentence. Becky immediately answered the summons, and as quickly returned:—"Oh, mem! it's that monster of a man, Mr."—

Becky was a quick speaker, but ere she had uttered the word due, Mr. Uriah Cloudy personally introduced himself. Now women have a peculiar dexterity in hiding things: with almost more than feminine rapidity, Mrs. Cramp threw me at the back of her chair, and prepared herself for her visitor.

"Girl, you're not wanted," said Mr. Cloudy to Becky. "Go into the kitchen."

The Muggletonian having been the spiritual adviser of the late cardmaker, for the nonce installed himself the master of his widow's maid. Becky seemed resolved to question the usurpation, but a look from her mistress sent her grumbling from the room.

"You're quite happy, Mrs. Cramp?" asked Cloudy.

"Happy as can be expected," answered the widow.

"It's a blessed thing I'm left executor," said the Muggletonian. Mrs. Cramp said nothing. "And now, Mrs. Cramp, I'm come upon a solemn business. I come to bring you the words of the dead."

"Mr. Cloudy!" cried the widow, anxiously; as though half-expecting some unpleasant communication from her buried husband.

"You knew my Rebecca? Well, wasn't she a woman? A wedding-ring wasn't lost upon her, was it? Well, she knew she was dying. Dear creature! She knew everything. It was strange, too—at least, if we didn't know all things are for the best—it was strange that she should go only a month before your poor man: but she knew he'd follow her; she knew it, ma'am; she knew it. And so she called me to her, and said, 'Uriah, will you take my last words to that dear angel of a woman, Mrs. Cramp?' Dear angel were her very words, or I'm the

worst of sinners. Rebecca, says I, make your mind easy, I'll tell her every syllable. Then she takes hold of my hand—just as I take hold of yours, Mrs. Cramp—and says, 'Uriah I'm a-going, and Mr. Cramp is coming after me. You and Mrs. Cramp will be left alone in the world. She's a dear woman, and'"—

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Cloudy," cried the widow, never divining human meaning better in all her life.

"It's only my respect for the dead, Mrs. Cramp, that makes me offend you; but Rebecca promised to haunt me if I didn't do as she begged me. 'She's a dear woman,' she said, 'and, as I think, has always had an honest regard for you. When I'm gone, Uriah, you'll be left a poor unprotected creature in the world. Nobody to look to your wants; to take care of your darning, your linen, and your nice, little hot suppers. Oh, Uriah! I couldn't rest in my grave if I thought it; and so, in decent time, go to that dear Mrs. Cramp when she's a widow, and give her my love and my compliments, and say, if she'd be really happy in this life, she'll much oblige me by marrying you.'"

With these words, Uriah Cloudy dropt upon his knees, and Mrs. Cramp suddenly jumping from her seat, the chair fell back to the floor. Becky, startled by the noise, ran into the room, and picking me up, hid me under her cloak. "What's the matter, mem?" she cried.

Mrs. Cramp could give no answer, but burst into a violent fit of laughter.

"It's nothing, Becky, nothing," said the Muggletonian; "only taking on about your poor master."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MRS. CRAMP'S NEW SUITOR.—THE WIDOW'S CAP.

"You needn't wait for Mr. Cloudy, I'll show him out," said Mrs. Cramp. "And Becky, go directly where I told you. You know," added the widow significantly, and I felt Becky clutch me closer as she answered, "I know, mem;" and she immediately turned from the room. Ere, however, she closed the street-door, I heard Mrs. Cramp again loud in her silver laughter; again evidently taking on for the buried cardmaker.

It was nearly dark, and Becky tripped along with the true timidity of a London maid-of-all-work. For myself, I was in despair. I felt it—I knew it—I was carried onward to be stained,

lost for ever: widowhood had passed sentence upon me, I was to be dyed. I put it to the reader—proud, it may be, of the clearness of his complexion, what would be his agony if he knew that to-morrow morning he must inevitably rise a blackamoor! I put it to you, madam; you, with your milky cheek, carnation-tinted; would you not break your glass when it showed you a Hottentot?

Still Becky tripped along, inhumanly humming, I think, "Nancy Dawson," when a man, crossing the way, stood before her. Becky immediately drew herself up; and I could feel that her heart began to flutter and beat, precisely as every woman's heart has beat since the first rub-a-dub in Paradise. Becky knew not whether the monster was about to compliment or insult her; she was equally prepared for either incident.

"My pretty maid,"— began the stranger.

"None o' your nonsense," broke in Becky, and I could feel her jerk, and I have no doubt she sneered.

"Don't be cruel, child," said the man, in a soft, gentle voice.

"Never was cruel in my life," said Becky, the man's musical words melting in her bosom.

"Well then, my dear,"— and the stranger laid his hand upon the maid.

"None o' your nonsense," cried Becky, starting back; "you'd better not; I wears pattens."

"You have the advantage of me," replied the man, with a bow; "but I am sure you are too much a lady of honour to use it."

"I've two hands of my own, and they're quite enough upon me at one time, that's all," said Becky; "so what you've got to say, you can say with your hands in your pockets."

Becky's reproof evidently struck upon the fine sense of the stranger, for he immediately pulled out his purse, and offering the maid, as it appeared to me, a piece of gold, asked if she would make him happy by accepting it.

Becky received the coin, merely observing, "There could be no harm in that."

"And now, my dear, one word; is your sweet mistress within?" asked the donor.

"In course; crying her dear eyes out for poor Mr. Cramp."

"That's a pity," said the stranger.

"She's murderin' herself," answered Becky.

"She must be saved," cried the man.

"But it's jest like us," answered the maid; "we are all fools alike. I wonder if he'd ha' gone on so about her? Not he; men are flints—not made as we are."

"And Mrs. Cramp is at home? Alone, too, no doubt?" said the stranger.

"Alone," said Becky, and she said no more. Her manner warranted the solitude of her mistress.

"You must tell her that a gentleman wishes particularly to see her," said the man.

"And her husband not been buried a week?" cried the maid, who, however, suffered the stranger to pass his hand under her elbow, turning her towards the widow's house. "I wouldn't do it for a thousand pounds," said Becky, as she stood at the late Mr. Cramp's door.

"'Twill be worth more than that to your dear mistress," said the stranger. "Come, I've no doubt you've the key."

"Well, what a man you are!" cried Becky, immediately producing that domestic implement. "Shouldn't wonder if I get turned away for it. Who shall I say?"

"Say, Edward—that's enough," said the man.

"Hush! Stop a minute, while I see if missus is alone; a neighbour may be with her," said Becky, softly turning the key, and entering the house with caution, the stranger following her. Becky immediately entered the parlour. "You are alone, mem?"

"Oh, yes," answered Mrs. Cramp, and again she burst into laughter. "I've made such a fool of the man. He thinks"—

"Hush, mem; there's a gentleman in the passage wants to see you. He seized me in the street, and would make me bring him to you. His name, mem—it's all he'll tell me—his name he says is Ed'ard!"

"Edward! Oh, heavens! bring the candles," cried Mrs. Cramp, sinking upon a chair. Becky immediately flung me upon a table, and rushed out of the room; at the same instant Edward passed from the passage, and—why was not I already dyed to be spared my blushes—and caught the widow in his arms! The worst remains to be told. Mrs. Cramp neither squealed, nor shrieked; nor conjured the man to depart—conjured him by the memory of her husband yet green in earth—by the gloom and sadness of her desolate weeds; no—astounded by the violence, all the poor woman was able to utter was—"Edward! Is it you?"

"It is," said Edward; and somehow it was impossible for the woman any longer to doubt it.

Can it be? Is it possible? Why does not Becky bring the candles? Edward kisses the widow; kisses her, and calls her his Clarissa! To kiss a woman in a widow's cap! Excuse *human* infirmity as we may, is there not very great presumption

in the act? Is it not greeting the handmaid of death—the—but it is plain, Edward wants imagination. Again we ask it, is there not something awful, freezing, in that white, chilling muslin, that sometimes surrounds the face of Venus with a frame of snow—that ices beauty for a twelvemonth? In the superstition of custom, we are prone to think the dead has yet some lien upon her—a year's hold at least. Is there not?—but there is this excuse for Edward; it is dusk; he cannot see the cap that ought to freeze him.

Thank goodness! Becky has brought the candles.

I was now enabled to have a good stare at Edward. He was a very handsome fellow; that is, ninety women out of a hundred would have called him handsome. His figure was thickset, but far above the middle height, with the chest and back of a gladiator. His face was large and open, with careless good humour upon it—his brow unlined by thought. He had a fine colour, black whiskers, a sufficiently large mouth, and remarkably white teeth. I know that Mrs. Cramp thought his eyes—they were black as coals—very beautiful: for my part, I liked not their expression. They were of those eyes that seem always trying to look gay and sparkle; and then there was an occasional dropping down and pulling of the corners of the mouth, as though twitched by uneasy heartstrings. My gentleman had clothed his fleshly man with a due sense of its excellence. There was lace on his cravat —gold-lace on his coat and waistcoat—gold loop and button in his beaver. He wore a jewel on his finger, and took snuff from what seemed a box of embossed silver. And this was Edward!

No, reader, it was not. It was Clickly Abram, highwayman. And did Mrs. Cramp know this? Not she, poor widowed dove. The truth is, she had met the man at Ranelagh; and as, conscientious soul! she could not boast of her husband, she had never spoken of his existence. Again, knowing that Mr. Cramp could not much longer endure this sinful world, his wife, like a provident woman, looked around her for a more than substitute for the dying cardmaker, and looking, beheld—Edward. Hence, she had always spoken of obstacles that time might destroy, and then—and then—Edward and she might wed; but Edward must wait. To Edward, the widow was the ward or niece of some ancient villain—for she now and then spoke of an old tyrant; —whilst to the widow, Edward was the only darling son of a rich lady of the manor somewhere near the Land's End. All this, I afterwards discovered; but as I hate mystery, I lay the case at once before the reader.

"Supper—something nice," said Mrs. Cramp in a whisper to

Becky, as the widow crossed the room to lay me upon the mantelpiece; and then as she returned—"Never mind expense."

"Ar'n't you surprised to find me as—as I am?" asked Mrs. Cramp, glancing at her mourning.

"Not in the least, my angel—I knew your husband's doctor all the time," said Abram.

"Is it possible? Well, if I'd have known! I shall never forgive myself," exclaimed the widow, trying to look very like a penitent.

"And now the maid's gone, my sweet one—name the day, when shall it be? I'm tired of this damned London, and I don't know how it is, I get quite foolish—I want to see the old lady—I want to hug my old mother again." Such were the filial yearnings of Edward; but we fear that the stir caused by the highway robbery of Clickly Abram had some influence upon his wish for travel. "When shall it be?" he asked, smiling upwards in the widow's eyes.

"Why do you ask me? You can leave London when you like—can't you?" said Mrs. Cramp, with an innocence that would have adorned girlhood at sixteen.

"No—no; I don't budge without my dear Clarissa. Come, we'll say next week."

"Impossible, Edward! Have you no respect for the world? and my husband only—no; you must wait a twelvemonth or two—a twelvemonth at least."

"Why? A man isn't any more dead after a year than after a day, is he?" asked the highwayman; and, to confess, Mrs. Cramp seemed willing to be puzzled by the thief's philosophy. "As for the world, it's a damned world, my dear, and not worth the pleasing; but, I tell you what—we'll get coupled in the country; come up to town in three or four years' time, and say we're just married."

"Oh, the art of man!" exclaimed Mrs. Cramp, throwing up her pretty eyes in sweet reproof.

"And I say, Clarissa, are you fond of poultry?" asked the thief.

"Don't dislike a chicken," answered the widow.

"But I mean poultry in its natural state? Ha! you should see my mother's doves; a million of 'em, my dear. How they *will* flock about you! And then our sheep, and our pet lambs; and the haycocks and the orchard; and the peaches, like your own velvet face, ripening on the wall; and the pigs; and the harvest-home; and the dairy; and, eh—eh, Clarissa?" and the highwayman laughed and rubbed his hands, full of glee at the rural objects that his imagination had placed at "his mother's."

"Mrs. Cramp was evidently touched by the promised Paradise; for she said with a sigh, "Well, I do like the country."

And thus the lovers—for we must call them so—talked, until the supper came. Becky proved herself bountiful as expeditious. She had attacked the larder of a neighbouring tavern, and had carried off a most substantial and most varied banquet. And wine and brandy dignified the feast.

Eating and drinking soften the heart. Edward became more urgent for instant flight, and marriage in the country; whilst Mrs. Cramp said nothing, but sighed the more heavily.

Bumper after bumper was swallowed by the wooer, and his increased passion did honour to the distiller. "No, my angel, we'll be off—off by to-morrow; and you shall be like a shepherdess in China—and as for that cap"——

Mrs. Cramp, dreaming doubtless of the cardmaker, had sat twiddling her cap-strings, until the tie was loosed; whereupon the enamoured and excited lover twitched the muslin from her head, swearing "it was wickedness to hide such lovely hair."

"Now, Edward!"

"It looks like a bit of his shroud—shall never wear it again—never—never!" And so saying, the husband elect threw the widow's cap upon the fire, thrusting it among the burning coals with the poker; and thus he stood triumphant over burnt muslin, whilst Mrs. Cramp clasped her hands in what she thought was rage, astonishment, and wounded affection.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I AM AGAIN TAKEN ABROAD.—THE WIDOW LOSES HER LOVER AND MYSELF.

It may be supposed that Mrs. Cramp was justly offended at the ruthless sacrifice of her cap—one of the few tokens by which she remembered her departed husband; one which, when she passed the looking-glass, convinced her she was a widow. To say the truth, she had a liking for the cap; there was a significant prettiness about it that pleased her mightily. Hence, she was majestically indignant with Edward. He was a brute—a ruffian; and then, her passion suffering a sweet *diminuendo*, he was finally a very foolish fellow. She would not take a glass of wine with him; she would not even touch the liquid; well, she would touch it and no more. She was not the foolish, weak woman he

thought her; but, if he was very good, she might go to the play with him on Tuesday. Should she ever see his mother, she would tell her what a scapegrace son she had—that she would.

And thus, with the prettiest affectation of remorse on the part of the highwayman, and with a coy, wayward pettishness on the side of the widow, who, never having been wooed by Mr. Cramp, promised herself an enjoyment of courtship in all its dear distracting variety,—thus, till eleven o'clock they sat, unseen Cupids hovering about them, snuffing the candles.

I will pass the separation of the lovers, which Mr. Abram vowed—and he ratified the oath with a bumper of brandy—tore the very heart out of his bosom. Then he burst into the snatch of an amorous ditty, whilst Mrs. Cramp begged him to remember the neighbours. To this appeal he made answer by singing the louder, and vowing if he were hanged he didn't care, he couldn't die at a happier moment. And then Mrs. Cramp wondered what nonsense was in the man's head about hanging; and, finally, she and Becky coaxed him to the door, and "hush-hushed" him into the street.

"Quite a gentleman, mem," said Becky, left alone with her mistress, who sat silently looking at her fingers. "You didn't see his hands, mem; never saw veal whiter, mem; always tell a true gentleman by his hands, mem. Can't be a London gentleman, mem,—has a country look. Ha! that's the place, mem, for my money. I could live among pigs, mem; and then for poultry—for breeding goslings, mem—I will say it, I was born for it, mem."

Becky's avowal of her love for an Arcadian life convinced me that the parlour-door was not without a key-hole.

"Lawks!" cried Becky, getting no answer from her mistress, —"here's the feather; I couldn't take it for"——

"Never mind," said Mrs. Cramp, and she took me from the mantel-piece; "never mind; we'll talk about dyeing it another time."

"Well, it would have been a pity and a shame, mem; besides, you won't be in nasty black a year—I'm sure you can't, mem."

"I've such a headache, Becky," sighed Mrs. Cramp. "I'll go to bed." And the widow, carrying me with her, and sighing very heavily, crept slowly up stairs to her bedroom, followed by her maid. Laying me carefully aside, she sank into a chair. Taking up her pocket-handkerchief, she sat mutely squeezing it between her palms, and then she slightly brushed the lawn across her eyes, and then her lips moved, as with some dolorous soliloquy. At length the widow cried, "This *is* lonesome, Becky."

"Might as well be buried alive, mem. I couldn't sleep here

alone, mem, for the world, mem. And, then, there's that pictur' of master, mem,"—and Becky glanced at a daub portrait of the late cardmaker hanging over the chimney-piece,—"it's shamefully like him, mem, isn't it?"

"Don't talk so, Becky; you don't know how you distress me.'

"Shall I turn him to the wall, mem?" and Becky, with the word, had mounted a chair to give a turn to the cardmaker.

"By no means," said the widow; "what harm can the poor man's picture do me?"

"I don't know, mem; but, if I was you, I should think he was always looking at me, mem; and, then, there's that big silver watch of his at the head of the bed. Well, how you can sleep with that, mem, I can't tell. I should think it was his sperrit, tick, ticking away all night, and I shouldn't wink for him."

"Silly creature!" said Mrs. Cramp, with a very faint smile.

"Why do you wind it up, mem?" cried Becky.

"Habit, Becky; I always did when the poor man was alive. But it *is* loud to-night, and my head is, I think, going to pieces. Put the watch under the mattress, Becky."

"Yes, mem," and in a trice the cardmaker's chronometer was crammed away. "Shall I turn the pictur', too, mem?" cried Becky.

"I'm afraid you should touch it: 'tis in such a wretched state, so worm-eaten, and I don't know what: remind me that I send it away to-morrow to be revived. And Becky, as I see, foolish girl, you are a little frightened, you shall sleep with me to-night."

And mistress and maid slept. The widow, for she told her vision when she awoke, dreamt that she was carried to the Land's End through the air, drawn by a team of pouter pigeons; whilst Becky, who was also favoured with a vision, declared that she had hatched a couple of dozen of goose-eggs, with twin goslings in every one of them.

Days passed on, and every day gave new brightness to the widow. She sang louder, laughed louder, trod her chamber with lighter step, and would lie and giggle in bed, Becky giggling in concert with her mistress. One morning, the widow observed to her confidential friend, "This black, Becky, is sad hypocrisy."

"To be sure, mem, it is; but then, mem, we can't be respectable without it."

"And then people stare so, if they see one in weeds with a gentleman, especially if one smiles, or"—

"A wicked world, mem; think people ought to have their sperrits in mourning as well as their backs. I should like to

know what mourning was made for, if it wasn't to carry it all off."

"I'll not go out in black to-morrow," said the widow, after a pause.

"Well, mem, I honours you for the resolution," cried Becky.

"At the same time the neighbours needn't know it," observed Mrs. Cramp.

"Why should they, mem? Ah, them neighbours! They're the cuss of one's life, mem. How happy all the world might be mem, if all the world hadn't neighbours, mem."

"I can wrap a cloak about me, and sneak into a coach, Becky," said Mrs. Cramp.

"And not a mouse be the wiser," said her maid.

The morrow came, the widow flung aside her black, and burst into colours. More; as an excelling bit of beauty, she took me. I was placed in her head; and I was delighted to find, as she looked and looked in the glass, that she fully appreciated the value of my presence. "A beautiful feather, isn't it, Becky?"

"I'll tell you the world's truth, mem," cried Becky, putting together her extended palms, and flinging them from her as she spoke—I've seen the Queen, mem, and she isn't fit to see you to bed, mem." Thus irreverently did Becky speak of her anointed majesty, Queen Charlotte, of rappee memory.

It was evening; a coach was called. Mrs. Cramp, as cautiously as a midnight cat would cross a gutter, put her foot into the street, and for an instant looked hurriedly about her: the next moment she was in the coach. The action was rapid, yet I thought I saw two or three figures on the opposite side of the way, watching the progress of innocent Mrs. Cramp.

The coach drove on. At length it stopped at the corner of a street. "All right," said a voice to the coachman, and immediately the door was opened, and "Edward" was seated beside Mrs. Cramp. "My angel!" he cried, "why wouldn't you let me take you up?"

"The neighbours, Edward—the neighbours," said the widow.

"The fellow knows where to drive?" asked the highwayman.

"I've told him—he can't mistake," said Mrs. Cramp. The coach rolled on.

"*This* surely can't be the way," cried the thief.

"He can't be wrong—I was so particular, Edward," replied the widow. "I hope we shall be in time for the beginning."

"Oh, I see; all right," said Abram, glancing through the window. At this moment the coach stopt. "This isn't Drury *Lane*," cried the highwayman.

"No," said a man who presented himself at the coach-door, and whom I instantly recognised as Hardmouth, the police-officer—"No, but it's Bow-street."

The highwayman turned round, and grasping the widow's hand, and looking like a demon in her face, he shouted—"Did *you* do this?"

"What? what?" cried the widow.

"Nothing, nothing, my dear," said Abram, assured by the woman's look of innocence. "Never mind, 'twill all be right. Hardmouth, take care of the lady," cried the highwayman, jumping nimbly out of the coach, and immediately disappearing amidst a crowd of constables.

"Edward, Edward!" exclaimed the widow.

"He's in a bit of trouble, mum," said one of the officers.

"Trouble!" cried the widow, and with the word she stood upon the pavement.

"Highway robbery, mum," said the same functionary.

"A robber!" exclaimed the woman, fainting in the arms of the constable, who carried her into the office.

"It can't be his wife, Tim," said a man, as he brought water to restore the sufferer.

"One on 'em, perhaps," was the answer.

In a few minutes the poor soul became conscious of all about her. She was told that Clickly Abram—her Edward—was a known highwayman—that a poor girl was in Newgate upon his account—a girl, sacrificed to his safety. A watch he had stolen upon the highway from a sailor had been found in her bed; what was that to him? He'd hang twenty women, and laugh at 'em afterwards.

Such were the acts, such the character, in brief, of the prisoner. The widow, of course, would not believe a word of the scandal. She insisted upon seeing her Edward; and, careless of all beside, she begged, entreated, that the officers would conduct her into the office. The officers, subdued by an influence which the widow had in her pocket, granted her request. She rushed forward to seek her Edward. In her agitation, I fell from her head, and for some minutes lay in the passage. And then, a rough, coarse-looking man took me up, and twirling me over and over, and grunting a sort of approbation of my beauty, put me under his waistcoat.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I AM TAKEN TO NEWGATE.—THE TURNKEY AND HIS WIFE.

I soon discovered that my new owner was a tenant of Newgate. Official business of some kind had for a time drawn him from his home to the police-office. I cannot clearly tell the purpose of his errand; but I believe it was to speak to new evidence which had come out against some thief committed for trial; and that duty fulfilled, my possessor had nought to do but straightway seek his home in the Old Bailey. Nevertheless, he lingered about the office, whiling away the pleasant minutes in sessional discourse, with old acquaintance. "Hanging must be the end of this?" said he to an emissary of justice. "Click can't get off this time?"

"Lord love you, no, Mister Traply," was the answer. "He may get measured for his coffin the first minute he has to spare."

"He's a fine fellow, and won't disgrace Tyburn," said my new master. "Ha! Tom — it's a pity for the time folks have to live, that they can't 'scriminate as to what belongs to 'em, and what don't."

"I don't know; it's all right and proper to say so; but if they did, what would become of us?"

"That's true, too. Well, it takes all sorts to make a world;" and with this worn adage, my new possessor prepared himself to depart, when Clickly Abram was brought into the hall, in the custody of a couple of officers, poor Mrs. Cramp, with streaming eyes and ashy face, following him; and declaring between her sobs, that "they should never tear him from her."

"Tell you what it is, mum," said Traply, gently taking the woman aside. "I'm turnkey in Newgate; and if you like to come there, you may be as happy as the day is long with him."

"Heaven bless you!" cried the widow. Nor did the excess of her gratitude make her forgetful of the surer means of touching Mr. Traply's sympathy.

"I can have a coach?" said the highwayman, looking about him with dignity.

"To be sure you can, captain," cried Traply; "and more than that, I'll ride with you."

The coach was speedily procured, and Mr. Abram as quickly invited to enter it.

"We shall be happy yet," cried Mrs. Cramp, throwing herself into the highwayman's arms.

"As turtles, my darling," said Abram; and then, in a lower voice, "don't forget the money."

Mrs. Cramp answered hysterically, "She would die first;" and then again and again embracing the thief, she was at length separated from him, fainting in the arms of an officer.

"All right. Newgate!" cried a linkman with a laugh, having just picked up a shilling, thrown to him by the culprit, as the coach was about to drive away.

"It's not so bad, I hope, sir?" said Traply, who had seated himself beside Abram.

"A bagatelle," answered the thief.

"I thought so," cried the turnkey; "and that's not capital."

Rapidly the minutes passed, and we stopt at Newgate. I shall never forget that dead halt. Ere the prison-door was opened, it seemed to me a pause between life and death—and then, what a terrible transition! Now, and the man, albeit a prisoner, had out door-life about him; saw the worldly working of men; saw free faces; beheld the passers-by carrying on the business of life: some were going to their homes; some, as perhaps the prisoner fashioned to himself, going to merry meetings. And yet he—he—was as unthought of, as unacknowledged, as though he had never been. Still he felt himself a part of the world; he saw its people, and he was of them; another instant—the prison-door had closed upon him, and the outward world was to him a dream! Between this and that side of a prison threshold, may there not be grey hairs?

My possessor, Mr. Traply, was a privileged man in Newgate; and therefore, as others might say, he was permitted to have his greatest comforts about him. And Mrs. Traply was allowed to do her best to turn a gaol to Paradise by her presence. I fear, however, that the opportunity was rarely improved by the good woman, whose first principle was to teach her husband the virtue of humility, by constantly showing to her mate how very much she was above him.

It was late when I arrived in Newgate—very late. Mr. Traply, doubtless to cheat the misanthropy of prison life, had humanised himself with an extra allowance of liquor. That good intention was by no means applauded by the partner of his fate.

"Here you are again, like a beast, Mr. Traply," cried the wife from between the bed-clothes, as the turnkey entered his den of a bed-room. "Well! if my father, the lawyer, had ever thought I should come to this!"

"Where could he think you would come to, when he brought

you up, Mrs. Traply,—eh? Where, ma'am, but to Newgate?" asked the bacchanal and brutal husband.

"You're a villain!" cried Mrs. Traply.

"That's my affair, Charlotte," said the turnkey. "Nevertheless, my pet lamb, look here."

"Don't lamb me! Ha! I wish my dear father was only here."

"More shame for you; if he was, he'd be hanged, you know, for coming back afore his time. Now, look here, Charlotte."

"I won't look at nothing," cried Mrs. Traply; who then asked, "What is it?"

Mr. Traply approached the bed-side, and with a candle in one hand, and me in the other, presented himself to the sparkling eyes of his placable wife.

"What a beautiful feather, Mike! Where did you get it?" cried Mrs. Traply.

"Get it? I'm always a buying something for you," said the turnkey.

"It *is* a dear! But what's feathers in Newgate?" sighed the wife.

"Well, well, we sha'n't always be here, Charlotte. What's the news? Anything happened since I went out?"

Mrs. Traply, taking me in her hand, and carefully examining me by the candle, whilst her husband prepared himself for bed, began, in a changed voice to narrate the events passing in her husband's absence. For once I felt I had been a peacemaker between man and wife; for the late complaining, shrewish Mrs. Traply spoke in accents of connubial sweetness: "*That* gentleman has been here again."

"What, Mr. Curlwell?" cried Traply. "Well?"

"It seems, as they call it in books, quite a passion with the man. But he says, he'll give anything if we can only tell him how to get the girl off."

"And what says Patty?" asked the turnkey, by this time in bed.

At the word, I trembled; for I knew they spoke of the helpless, innocent creature, then with shame and misery upon her, a captive in Newgate.

"She says, she doesn't want him to meddle or make with the business," answered the turnkey's wife.

"What then, she doesn't buckle to him yet?" asked Traply.

"She quite shivers and turns white when you talk of him. And, for all I had her up here to tea to-night, and tried to talk reason to her, she said she'd rather die than she'd have him."

"Well, then, she must die," said Traply.

"Lor, Mike!" cried the woman; "you don't mean it?"

"That is, you see, we must make her believe that Mr. Curlwell can get evidence enough about her—right or wrong, no matter—to hang her, if she won't have him."

"Well, do you know, Mike, I think she would die first," said Mrs. Traply.

"You're a fool, wife," answered the turnkey, "and know nothing of natur. All that we have to do is to keep from her the news that Click Abram's taken."

"And is he taken?" asked Mrs. Traply.

"*Is* he taken? Whenever I go out of Newgate, I don't go for nothing; I think I always bring my bird home with me. Yes, we have him. It's a comfort to think we have him sleeping as sweet as any babby under the same roof with us." The caption of the highwayman was plainly too high an achievement for Traply not to put in some claim to it. "He's sure to be hanged," said the turnkey, yawning.

"You don't say so?" cried the turnkey's wife, slightly yawning too. "Well, for my part, Mike—after all, you're not so bad; that is a pretty feather you've bought me—for my part, I don't think—no, I wouldn't hang nobody."

"You wouldn't hang nobody!—You're a fool, wife; and don't know what morals is," cried Traply.

"Well, and now you've bought me that feather, what's the use of it?" asked Mrs. Traply, with a quick jump from death to ornament. "Feathers is of no use in Newgate, Mike."

"You don't think I'm always a-going to bury myself as a turnkey, do you?" asked Traply.

"I should think not," said his spouse. "Suppose, now, the governor should die"——

"And what then?" asked Traply.

"Why, you *might* get his place. I say you might get his place. For you can't think what civil things Alderman Ruby says of you. Then, if you was governor, I suppose I should dress a little different to what I do now?"

"Well?" cried Traply, with a half-snore.

"And then, I suppose, we should see and be seen?"

"Well?" said the turnkey in a fainter voice.

"And then, I suppose, we should go and dine with the Lord Mayor?"

"Humph!" grunted Traply.

"And I suppose, if we was to ask him, the Lord Mayor would come and dine with us?"

The turnkey was asleep.

"I say, Mike," and Mrs. Traply plied her elbow in her

husband's side—"I say, suppose the Lord Mayor—Mike!—you don't hear what I say?—I say, suppose"——

Traply snored deeply—most profoundly.

Mrs. Traply having fallen into a waking dream of ambition, would not dismiss it. She, therefore, again moved her connubial elbow:—"I say, Traply—my dear Traply!—I say, suppose"——

The turnkey jumped up in the bed, exclaiming, with most savage emphasis—"Mrs. Traply, I have to go to Tyburn to-morrow morning; and suppose you go to sleep, that you may get up time enough to mend them holes in my stockings?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

I MEET PATTY BUTLER IN NEWGATE.—THE TURNKEY'S WIFE PLEADS FOR CURLWELL.

At the time—the good old time—I was in Newgate, there was a finer spirit of cordiality between the keepers and the kept than at the present day lessens the gloom of that great, yet necessary evil. The departing spirit of romance still lingered about it. Fine ladies thronged the lobby to roll their liquid eyes upon the gentle highwayman; and housebreakers, though barred from liberty, were still treated as persons of distinction, indulgence being ever vendible for ready money. In those days, Bacchus and Venus were never denied by the grim turnkey; but received with a frank courtesy due to their large influence on the lives of mortals. Hence, Newgate was not the stony terror of our time. Certes, it was not so clean; but then, in all the real enjoyments of life, how much more comfortable! Soap is but a poor commodity, exchanged against that agreeable license which softens captivity. True, there was then the gaol-fever, that sometimes lessened the fees of the hangman; but then there was permitted ingress to all black-bottles, with no inquisitorial nose of turnkey, snuffing their contents. Even then romance gilded the prison flags, and cast a bloom, a lustre on the footpad and the burglar. Then was there popping of corks and rustling of lutestring. And now is Newgate a hard, dull, dumpish reality; dull as a play-house. As if too in mockery of the glad past, the gyves of Jack Sheppard hang, ignobly idle, in Newgate lobby. The imagination may yet play around them; but, alas! they are but as a satire and reproach to the poor, weak ankles of the degenerate burglar of our time: to the living felon of present

Newgate, as the Elgin Marbles to the dwarfs that gaze on tiptoe about them.

That Mrs. Traply should board and bed with her husband in Newgate was a part of the indulgence vouchsafed in the old, benevolent day: turnkeys are not now so blessed. Hence, I owed my introduction to the gaol, and my early meeting with dear, persecuted Patty. Mr. Traply quitted his connubial bed before daylight, called from his repose by the iron tongue of law. "Ugh!" he grunted, as he put on his clothes, "here's a day, I can tell, to call a man out! Pretty ride I shall have to Tyburn. It's pleasant enough in summer; but this weather's enough to kill a man."

"Never mind, Mike," said his wife; "I've got you what you love for dinner—rabbit and onions; so let the thoughts of that comfort you as you go and come."

"Ha!" cried Traply, "a man wants something, heaven knows;" and with this saying he went upon his awful errand, an errand to be lightened by the dream of dinner.

When Mrs. Traply rose, she looked at me again and again, and vowing I should be a perfect beauty when a little put to rights, began to prepare breakfast. Suddenly she stopped; and then adding a second cup and saucer, said—"Yes, poor dear, she shall breakfast with me; and, as luck would have it, she's a feather-dresser, she can tidy it up for me." With this thought Mrs. Traply left the room. In a few minutes she returned with Patty Butler, prisoner.

Poor thing! I thought to see her much changed; even more pale, more haggard than when carried from Bloomsbury. It was not so. Ill she looked—very ill. But to me she seemed as one who held constant communion with death, and was thereby comforted. There was sadness in her face, yet sadness glorified by sweetest patience. Sorrow seemed to ennoble her. She appeared no more sullied by all the hideous guilt and misery of the gaol than did the light of heaven that shone in upon her. Her eyes were mild and tearless; and at her mouth there was a smile of resignation; a smile that showed angelic might of heart; mighty from its very weakness. Her voice was changed; deeper, calmer.

"There, my dear child," said Mrs. Traply, whose heart was, after all, unchilled by the flints of Newgate, "there; make yourself happy with some tea and toast. Come; you seem a little down this morning. Ha! I don't wonder at it. I, who have been here these ten years—ha! my dear, when I danced at the race-ball with Sir Mohawk Brush, I never thought to come to Newgate. A little drop in your tea,"—and Mrs. Traply having

qualified her own cup with some brandy, proffered the restorative to Patty.—"You won't? Well, you know best. I should never get through these days without it. I'm sure it's enough to work poor Traply to death. They hang six more next Monday."

Patty spoke not, but shuddered; then with an effort compressed her lips.

"Jack Ketch drinks George the Third's health every Monday," said the woman; "calls him the real father of his people, he does so well know how to correct 'em. Ha!" cried Mrs. Traply, casting a glance at a Dutch clock in the corner, "they haven't got to St. Giles's Pound yet; and such a day! Poor dear Traply! I feel for his rheumatiz. And going, they do go *so* slow, my dear."

Patty tried to speak; she could not.

"You couldn't have lived so long in London without seeing such a sight, my love?"

"I never did—never will," said Patty.

"Let us hope not; for though there's a sort of something that makes one long to see it—I don't know, but it isn't pleasant—no my dear, it isn't," cried Mrs. Traply, with emphasis. "I was a young, giddy, happy thing, when I saw the first man hanged. Ha! my dear, little I thought of Newgate then. Well, we won't talk of it. We'll talk of your little trouble, my love. I'm sure I hope it will come to nothing. I'm sure *I* think you innocent."

"I am innocent," said Patty, mildly.

"But my dear," cried the turnkey's wife, "what's innocence in Newgate? Bless you, it's better to be a little guilty and safe outside, than be as innocent as snow, and locked up here. Still, you know, my dear, matters do look a little black against you. In case of the worst" ——

"I am prepared, even for the worst," said Patty.

"I don't blame you; as a Christian, my dear, I don't blame you," said the woman. "But for all that, you wouldn't throw away your life, my dear? It would be murder, you know."

Patty said no word, but sighed heavily.

"And you're so young; and if you was only once comfortable, I've no doubt would be very good-looking. Bless you! I shall live to see you a happy wife, and the mother of a dear family. Now, there's that gentleman, Mr. Curlwell—the man's a doting upon you. He says he'll lay out his last farthing upon lawyers and witnesses for you: and for money, in a good cause, there's kind-hearted people to be found who'll swear whatever they're told, my dear."

"I am sorry to hear it," said Patty.

"What! when they know you to be innocent, and will swear *what will* prove as much?"

"Never mind; we will not talk of it, Mrs. Traply. I have known but little to tie me to this world; and if it—if I say," here Patty struggled with her heart; then, observing me upon a chair, she said, her lips quivering as she spoke, "What a pretty feather! Is it yours?"

"Yes, my dear; though I don't wear such things now. Ha! the last time I wore that feather I danced with Sir Mohawk Brush—I think I've named him to you before. If he had only kept his word, what a sweet man he would have been. It's been tumbled, my love, lying by in my box; perhaps you can put it to rights for me?"

"Certainly—I shall, indeed, be glad; for you have been very kind to me."

"And I want to be kind to you, if you'll let me," said the woman. "Now there's Mr. Curlwell"——

"Pray, do not speak of him," said Patty.

"A nice, kind, affable man; older than you, to be sure; but all the better; for die when he will, he'll leave you snug. Suppose now—I merely say suppose—he could get you out of this trouble, if you'd only marry him? Suppose, I say there was nothing between death and the church, what would you do?"

Patty, who had been gazing at me, laid me down upon the table, and, looking full at the woman, answered in a calm, deep voice—"Die."

"You'd never be so wicked?" cried Mrs. Traply.

"I will never be so wicked," said Patty, "so false, so cruelly deceitful towards any man, as to vow a love where my heart sickens."

"Yes, my dear, but to die," said Mrs. Traply.

"But to live," cried Patty, with quick earnestness; "to live and be a daily hypocrite; to feel a daily heartache; to shudder at even a word of tenderness: to loathe one's-self for seeming content—happy! Where all this is, what *can* be life? Oh, no!" said Patty, with a gentle smile, "I have thought of death; and, indeed, I *can* die."

"Ha! my dear, that's often our pride and vanity to think so. But to die any way in our own sheets, with the doctor, and every other comfort about us, and to have all sorts of civil things said in a sermon made on purpose for us, even then, my dear, death is bad enough; but what, when you go out of the world with a bad name—with the world, my love, always to have something to say against you?"

"Terrible, very terrible," said Patty, placing her hand to her brow, "but I have thought of this too: and it is little, very

little, with the thought of innocence. The world!" cried Patty, in a piteous voice; "what shall I be to the world? What to me the blame or praise of the world, when I am in the grave?"

"Yes, my dear; but you must own there's a hard trial 'twixt Newgate and that. Ha! at this moment, poor things,"—and again Mrs. Traply looked at the Dutch clock—"at this very moment, they're taking their last sup at the Pound. Ha! there's the trial, my love."

Patty trembled from head to foot, and I could see her small hands work convulsively—could see the fighting of her heart to keep the terror down, as Mrs. Traply, for the kindest purpose, as she thought, painted the horrors of the death-journey from Newgate to Tyburn.

"You don't know what it is, child, or you wouldn't talk in that way. Ha! my dear, it's very different to going with a party, and sitting at a window to see the poor things in the cart; that's very different to being one of 'em, you know. Innocence, my dear, is all very well; but I don't know any innocence that could bear to be stared at by thousands of people, all looking as if they had red-hot eyes upon you. And then to see the whole street swimming about you—and to have the blood like boiling lead in your ears—for a dear soul as was reprieved told me all about it—and how all the men and women looked like stony-faced devils round him—and how as he heard some of 'em laugh, it went like a knife into his heart—and how as the cart rumbled along, he prayed for the stones to open and bury him—and how when he got to Tyburn, ha! my dear, he was proved as innocent as you are, and yet he felt all this—and how, as I was saying, when he got to Tyburn—but you don't listen to me?"

The woman spoke the truth; for Patty had sunk beneath the struggle of her feelings, and lay insensible in the chair.

CHAPTER XXX.

PATTY IS VISITED BY MRS. GAPTOOTH AND CURLWELL.—OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

"If she hasn't fainted!" cried the turnkey's wife, jumping from her seat to the side of Patty. "Poor little lamb!" said the woman, as she applied restoratives to the girl, and chatted calmly the while—for her prison-experience had taught her composure at such moments—"Poor little kitten! A stout heart she has for Tyburn! No, no; I shall dance at her wedding yet! Dear me? well, she *is* gone. Ha! I'm sure when Traply first asked me, I thought I'd be torn to bits first; and now—well, it might be worse." In this wise, the turnkey's wife continued to talk to herself, when at length Patty sighed heavily. "Yes, yes," said the woman, "she'll cry soon, and then be nice and comfortable." At this moment there was a knock at the door. "Come in," cried Mrs. Traply, not stirring from her charge.

The door was opened, and Mrs. Gaptooth with Curlwell, the valet, immediately entered.

"Lor! and is it you?" cried Mrs. Traply. "Here she is, poor thing! but she'll be better now you're come, Mr. Curlwell;" and the woman threw what she believed to be a very speaking look at the valet, graced, too, with a pretty bridling of the neck.

"Poor soul! poor heart!—Well, if ever!" cried Curlwell; and he then stared at Patty with knitted eyebrows and open mouth. "Who'd ha' thought it?" he then cried. "If Newgate hasn't made her all the beautifuller. Ha! Mrs. Gaptooth, she's a lily that would grow anywhere;—a golden flower she is!"

I could perceive that Mrs. Gaptooth had the most contemptuous opinion of Curlwell's taste; and this opinion she motioned to the turnkey's wife, who, by her mute acknowledgment of the intelligence, showed that she, too, considered the valet as a poor, fascinated, lost man. As, however, Curlwell looked for some sort of affirmation from Mrs. Gaptooth, that well-practised woman awarded to him one of her most elaborate smiles.

"She's coming round—a dove!" said Mrs. Gaptooth. "As time's getting short, Mr. Curlwell, and as I wouldn't have you throw your money away upon an ungrateful person" ——

"I'll spend a hundred pound upon her," cried the valet, with magnanimous energy.

"Not upon another man's wife, I should think. You'd never be so extravagant as that, Mr. Curlwell?" cried the full-fed, oily hag.

"What do you mean, ma'am?" asked Mr. Curlwell. "Another man's wife, ma'am?"

"Certainly. If the gal will marry you, why you know best, and may buy your wife out of Newgate; but if, like a proud saucy jilt as she may be, she won't have nothing to do with you, why, you're only saving an ungrateful cretur from Tyburn, to be for what you know, wife to some other man. That's *my* meaning, Mr. Curlwell," said the hideous woman.

"To be sure," said Mrs. Traply; "the gentleman oughtn't to lay his money out in the dark. He ought to know what's what first. It's but reasonable."

"I'll spend a hundred pound upon the dear creature!" repeated the valet.

"You'll do as you like, Mr. Curlwell; but, as your friend,—though, the Lord help me! real friends are held cheap now-a-days—as your friend, and as the trial's coming on next week, you ought not to throw away your money, the reward of your honest labour—the very sweat of your brow, as I may say—without knowing what for. So let the gal speak out, once and for all. For my part, I'm upright and downstraight, and can't abide pigs in pokes. And now," cried Mrs. Gaptooth, dropping with physical emphasis upon a chair, "now you know *my* mind."

"She's coming to," said Mrs. Traply.

"Go into the next room—he may, my dear, mayn't he?—and, when the gal's quite recovered, you can get an answer." Thus counselled Mrs. Gaptooth.

Mr. Curlwell again muttered his determination to lay out a hundred pounds, and passed into the adjoining room. Mrs. Gaptooth slowly turned her head, following him with a most pitying sneer. She then rose, and approached Patty. "A hundred pounds! and for a nose like that! If the blessings of money ar'n't thrown away upon some people!"

"She's getting better," said Mrs. Traply; who continued, in a low tone of confidence,—"You're right, Mrs. Gaptooth. Men are fools, ma'am, when they get a fancy in their heads—quite fools. Noses, indeed! The noses, and the eyes, and the complexions too, that I've seen taken out of the dirt, carried to church, and stuck up for life in carriages! People talk of beauty; but I do think there's often great luck in solid ugliness. She's getting better. Men *are* fools."

"They are, my dear," said Mrs. Gaptooth; "and perhaps after all, it's as well it is so: it makes all the better for the

weakness of our sex. She'll do now;" and Mrs. Gaptooth turned aside, as Patty unclosed her eyes, and looked dreamily about her.

"There, you're better—to be sure you are," said Mrs. Traply, "and it was very foolish of you to take on so. Bless your poor heart! you'll never suffer anything of the sort, not you. No, no; you've too many good friends about you, if you'll only let 'em be your friends."

"I am better," said Patty, leaning her brow, as if in pain, upon her hand. "It was weak of me to—but, pray, say no more of it."

"There, your colour's coming like a carnation," said Mrs. Traply; "and, since you've been ill, some friends have come to see you."

"Mr. Lintley?" cried Patty, with sparkling eyes and animated face.

"No, not Mr. Lintley, but"——

Ere the woman could end the sentence, Mrs. Gaptooth showed herself, approaching Patty. I shall never forget the two faces. They seemed the incarnated expressions of confident wickedness and alarmed innocence. When I first saw the old woman at Madame Spanneu's, I confess I was tricked into a respect for her; she seemed so meek, so mild, so matronly. And now—perhaps it was from seeing her in contrast with Patty—I felt for her a loathing, a disgust! This feeling was strengthened by what I witnessed in the turnkey's room.

The old woman, overlaying her broad ripe face with a smile—a laborious look of complacency—made up to Patty. As she approached, the face of the girl changed to marble paleness; her eyes looked darker and darker; and her mouth became rigidly curved, with an expression of mingled fear and scorn. Once, as from some ungovernable impulse, she shivered from head to sole. She grasped the arms of the chair, and still shrank back as the old woman came nearer to her. She seemed possessed by some terrible antipathy—some irrepressible loathing—that, in its intensity, made her powerless. Still Mrs. Gaptooth, with her undaunted smiles, advanced. She was about to lay her hand upon Patty, when, with almost a shriek, the girl leaped from her chair.

"Creature! touch me not!" Patty exclaimed with a vehemence that surprised me. She then passionately seized Mrs. Traply by the hand, begging protection from that "horrid woman."

As Patty spoke the words, the shadow of a black heart darkened the woman's face: in one brief moment, I beheld

within it the iniquities of a long noisome life. The old crone stood for a moment eyeing the girl like a baulked witch. It was a hideous sight.

"You're a foolish, fly-away puss," said Mrs. Gaptooth, rallying herself, and again essaying her customary smile, though I could see the harridan still shaking with passion. "I come to do you good, and you call me wicked names.—Ha! you have much to answer for—you have."

"I know the good you would offer," said Patty; "you have offered it before. I was helpless, alone, without a friend; and, therefore, you offered it.—Oh!" and Patty cried as from a crushed heart—"shame upon you!"

"You silly little child," said Mrs. Gaptooth, still striving to trample upon her passion. "You foolish little pet," she cried, and laughing, would have playfully pinched Patty's cheek, but the girl with a look repelled her—"There, you silly creature," she continued, "all I said about a lord, and a fine gentleman, and a carriage, and gay clothes, and all that, was only a tale—a story to try you. Now, there is no lord in the case; but an honest, worthy gentleman."

"You lose your pains," said Patty, again restored to her composure.

"He can and will take you out of this place," cried the invincible Mrs. Gaptooth, "and make you his lawful wedded wife. Do you hear what I say, child?—his lawful, wedded wife. What say you now, Patty?"

"I say again to you," answered the girl, with the natural dignity of a pure heart—"I say again, you lose your pains, woman. Go."

Patty had overcome the patience of Mrs. Gaptooth. That ignominious word, *woman!*—that name so stung its unworthy possessor, that the old crone gave up her tongue to unlimited indulgence. In a deep contemptuous tone, she first begged to ask Patty what she thought of herself that she called her betters, woman?—"You, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Gaptooth. "You!—woman, indeed! and in such a place!—In Newgate, madam—Newgate!—or, perhaps, miss, I say miss, you have forgotten where you are?"

"Indeed, no; nor the cause, the wicked cause, that brought me here," said Patty.

"Clickly Abram, and a gold watch," cried Mrs. Gaptooth, with a loud malicious laugh.

At this moment I observed the door open, and apothecary Lintley, followed by some one whose face I could not see, was about to enter. He, however, shrank back, the door remaining

ajar. The noise caused by Mrs. Gaptooth enabled Lintley to make this backward movement without being noticed.

"I was happy, at least I was content, when you, like some bad thing," said Patty, "when you beset my daily walk—when you followed me to my home—when you uttered words to me. You, an old woman that should have advised, have comforted a helpless creature like myself—when you tempted me with—but you know the wickedness, the shame! It was to avoid you, who seemed to taint my life, I left a comfortable home—lost the means of certain bread. I was driven—by want and sickness driven—to the miserable house, where the most cruel accident"——

"Accident! Ha! ha!" chuckled Mrs. Gaptooth. "Accident put a gold watch in a lady's bed! And do you know what comes of such accidents?"

Patty looked pityingly upon the hard-hearted creature, saying —"Yes; I know."

"And now, you would have the impudence to abuse me—who would have been your best friend—you, standing there, so bold and glib, do you know that you mayn't have another month to live?"

"Oh, Mrs. Gaptooth!" cried the turnkey's wife, moved by the fiendish malice of the hag.

"She does not hurt me; let her speak," said Patty, with a patient, yet a worn and wearied look. "It is very true," she then said, turning to the wretched woman, "another month—or less and I may be with the dead. I do not fear to go to them; and that, your own heart will tell you so—nothing better—that is much. Let me then seem to you a dying creature; and with my dying breath, let me—poor, wretched woman!—let me pray you to repent. Consider it; what a weight of broken hearts is upon your soul! What daily misery, what nights of horror, fall to your account. Repent, I say; or what, indeed, will be the last hour to you? What the thoughts of helpless, happy creatures, snared and killed by your wickedness? Again, I say, repent!"

There was a moment's pause. The old woman had recoiled, shrunk beneath the quiet energy of soul with which Patty addressed her. There was a pause; and the woman with a tenacity of evil—a daring resolution not to be awed and beaten by a girl—shrieked at her. Many of her words were unintelligible from their shrill volubility: they seemed to me the sounds of some fierce, brutish thing. "What you! you! you!" at last I distinguished—"You to preach to me! To me! Now, I tell you what—I tell you what," screamed the harridan, approaching Patty with clenched, trembling fists—"I'll see you hanged—I'll

see you hanged! If I give twenty guineas for a window, I'll see you hanged—I'll see you hanged—Twenty guineas! Twenty guineas!"

The door opened, and Apothecary Lintley, followed by Mr. Inglewood—whom we trust the reader has not wholly forgotten—entered the room.

"What wretched creature is this?" asked Lintley, looking at Mrs. Gaptooth, as she stood writhing and spent with execration.

She, however, made one last raging effort; for, bursting into a loud hysteric laugh, she exclaimed, "Twenty guineas to see her hanged! Twenty guineas!"

And whooping, the demoniacal woman rushed from the room.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CURLWELL'S SUIT REJECTED.—APPEARANCE AND GRIEF OF THE WIDOW CRAMP.

"Have I not heard of this woman, eh, child?" said Lintley, taking Patty's hand. "The wretch! must she follow you even here? But now we will not talk of her. This is Mr. Inglewood, a clergyman, my friend. He had heard your story, and wished to see you."

"You will pardon me, I hope?" said Inglewood. "It was impossible to suppress such a wish, learning such a history. I came—I felt it my Christian duty—to counsel, comfort you. I find you well prepared; so well, many might learn their best lesson of you. Young woman, the sorrow that has fallen upon you becomes, through patience, a sweetness and a beauty. It is a fiery trial, this," said Inglewood, with a slight tremor of voice, "and proves the purity of your immortal spirit."

Patty made no answer; but with downcast eyes and flushing face seemed to shrink and tremble at the commendation of the speaker. Her agitation increased: her feelings had been overwrought in the past scene, and now the voice of tenderness and sympathy quite subdued her. Still grasping Lintley's hand, her big heart relieved itself in tears.

(Let me seize this moment—for I would fain explain matters as I proceed—to account for the appearance of Mr. Inglewood. As I afterwards discovered, he had become known to Mr. Lintley through Dr. Wilson, who, it may be remembered, was physician to the Countess of Blushrose and her child; and whose recom-

mendation had introduced Lintley, albeit too late, to the Earl's house. When Inglewood renounced his chaplain's office, he sought—but vainly sought—for the humblest curacy. Promises, promises were, after a time, almost his daily food. Still, often dinnerless, he put a blithe look upon ill-fortune, descending from his garret to the world, as though he came warm from every household comfort. And then it happened, that as his purse shrank, his health failed. When he appeared in the prison he looked a disappointed, patient, dying man. Had he made his condition known to the Earl of Blushrose—the Earl's nephew was out of England—that kind, good-hearted nobleman had placed him in employment. Often, the poor parson promised himself to make the appeal; and then something put off the hour. That something could not have been pride; for Inglewood himself was the last person to suspect it.)

"Come, Patty, I have some good news for you," said Lintley. "The man Abram is taken—is now a prisoner in the goal."

"La, sir, and if he is," said Mrs. Traply, vexed that the secret should have escaped, "the judges won't take his word for the young woman's innocence, supposing he can be brought to swear it: and if he's a chance of slipping his own head out of the rope —oh, sir, I know what Newgate is—he won't mind whose head he puts into it. As for Mrs. Gaptooth, why, she's as good a heart, I'll be bound, as ever beat; but temper, sir—temper spoils the best of us. I'm sure I should be sorry, very sorry, if anything was to happen to the girl; and if you'll take my advice," —here Mrs. Traply beckoned Lintley and Inglewood apart, and lowered her voice to a confidential whisper—"take my advice, and persuade her to marry the gentleman in the next room, he'll lay out any money on witnesses. And he's quite struck with her; quite foolish like; and more than that, really means honour and nothing less."

"Of what gentleman do you speak?" asked Lintley.

"Mr. Curlwell," answered the turnkey's wife.

"Mr. Curlwell, pray walk into this room," said Lintley, opening wide the half-closed door, and discovering the valet, who, stationed close beside it, had overheard all that had passed. Curlwell, somewhat abashed, awkwardly complied with Lintley's request. Patty, who, for the first time, was made conscious of the presence of her old persecutor, instinctively approached Lintley, as for protection.

"Your servant, Mr. Inglewood; hope you are well, sir. Strange place to meet in, Mr. Inglewood," said Curlwell, whose visits to the Earl's housekeeper, Mrs. Pillow, had made the person of the chaplain no stranger to him. Moreover, the valet

wanting a subject to relieve his confusion, availed himself of the readiest that offered.

"I have heard of you, Mr. Curlwell," said Lintley; "and as the friend, the protector, of this young woman, desire a little plain speaking. Why do you follow her?"

"Honour, sir; all honour," answered the valet, throwing back his head, and spreading the fingers of his right hand over his heart. "I hope, Mr. Lintley, sir, I'm a man above prejudice. And I'm not ashamed to own it, I don't think Miss Butler at all guilty; and to prove it, sir, if a jury should think as I do—and as I've had lawyer's opinion, there's little doubt all may be made straight, if we go the right way to work;" and here Curlwell slightly laughed, and slightly winked; "why, sir, then"——

"And then?" asked Lintley, in a tone not to be mistaken.

"And then, as I said before, sir," answered Curlwell, "I offer Miss Butler my hand, my purse, my heart. Can any gentleman do more?" cried the valet with a self-approving smile.

"Well, Patty," said Lintley, "it is now for you to speak. If Mr. Curlwell has followed you"——

"All love, nothing but love and honour," exclaimed the valet. "Nothing but that could have made me follow her as I have done; seeking her out in all corners. Oh, sir! the work I had before I found her in Bloomsbury—that will prove I'm in earnest. I know, I don't deny it, I've been wild, like other young men; but a man may repent, eh, Mr. Inglewood?"

"I hope you feel he may," answered the parson.

"Never was more certain of anything," said Curlwell; "and so, as I said before, if Miss Butler will let me try to clear this matter up, there's my hand, my purse, my heart."

"Patty," said Lintley again, "it is for you to speak."

Patty, in a most calm, collected manner, as though she had gathered her energies for the one effort, quitting the side of Lintley, approached Curlwell. The valet was plainly flattered by the action, and stood smiling, and working his fingers, ready to seize the hand that he was sure was to be resigned to him. "You would have my answer, Mr. Curlwell? I believe, I am sure, you are sorry for the pain you have given me; from my very heart I pardon you. I thank you, too, for the offer of your help; I cannot, on your terms, accept it. Still, sir, indeed, I thank you. Grant me one kindness—but one. Never again, whatever may be my fate—never waste a thought, a word upon me."

Thus Patty, in clear and passionless voice, destroyed the hopes of Curlwell.

"Well, you know best," cried the valet, with a face of scarlet,

violently putting on his gloves, and with equal violence trying to smile. "You know best; I meant well; and if things shouldn't turn out as some other people would desire, at the last moment don't blame me." Saying this, Curlwell stalked towards the door. Pausing a moment, he returned, approaching Patty. "Still," he said, "if you should alter your mind, remember there's my hand, my purse—yes, my purse and my heart." And then Curlwell disappeared, though unable to divest himself of the conviction that his offer must be accepted at the last: how, indeed, could it be otherwise?

"And now, Mrs. Traply," said the apothecary, "let me thank you for your goodness to my young friend here. I hope we shall not much longer trouble you. Dear me! I had almost forgotten. Here are the drops I promised you," and Lintley drew a phial from his pocket. "Take about twelve drops when you feel the fit come on."

"You're very kind, doctor. Nobody knows what I suffer from vapours, sometimes. And it's no wonder; I wasn't brought up to Newgate. When I was a girl at Chester—do you know Chester?" and Mrs. Traply sighed.

"Very well," answered Lintley.

"You don't know the family of the Brushes?" and again Mrs. Traply sighed.

"I can't say I do; but I have no doubt, from what I have heard you say, they are very excellent people:" Mrs. Traply having, in her short acquaintance with the apothecary, again and again talked of Sir Mohawk Brush and his high relations: insinuating, moreover, that she had never been troubled with the vapours at Chester; which desolating complaint, real or imaginary, had enabled Lintley cheaply to show his appreciation of Mrs. Traply's kindness to Patty. Hence the phial.

"Inglewood, I have some business in the prison: I will not be long," said Lintley, hastily quitting the room, as though animated by some sudden thought.

Inglewood for a moment looked confused. His face flushed, and when he appeared about to address Patty, words seemed to be denied him. And then he sighed heavily, and looking at the wretched girl, melancholy, like a deep shadow, fell upon him. For a moment he buried his face in his hand; he then rose, and walked rapidly up and down the narrow room.

"You don't look well, sir," said Mrs. Traply: "it's the weather."

"It is," answered Inglewood, listlessly, casting his heaviness of heart upon the all-suffering atmosphere.

"Will you try the doctor's drops, sir?" and the woman proffered

the phial, the harmless fraud—well would it be were all frauds so harmless—of Lintley. "With me the sky sometimes pours vapours; but then my nerves are like any cobwebs. Like me, sir, perhaps you're not used to London. Now, when I was at Chester"——

"I wish somebody would take you there, and never let you come back again," said Mr. Traply, entering the room, and bringing with him, well nigh dissolved in tears, the widow Cramp. "Here, make this lady comfortable, if there's room," cried the turnkey, glancing at Patty and Inglewood.

"Why, there's nobody here but Miss Butler and "——the turnkey's wife was proceeding.

"Butler! that's the young woman I wished to see! Oh, my dear child! How is he? A blessed creature! How is he?" cried Mrs. Cramp. "Doesn't he ask after me? Isn't he dying to see me?" exclaimed the widow, seizing Patty's hand.

"What is it—of whom do you speak?" asked Patty.

"Of whom? Why, of Edward—dear, suffering, innocent Edward," exclaimed the widow.

"She means Mr. Clickly Abram, the gentleman that's stole a watch," cried a voice; and looking, I observed the faithful Becky, Mrs. Cramp's maid.

"He did no such thing," cried Mrs. Cramp. "Dear slandered creature! he's as innocent as the baby at the bosom. And you're innocent, too," said the widow to Patty; "at least, I hope you are; but at all events, you can clear him, my dear girl, can't you?"

"Truly, madam," said Inglewood, "you seem to forget that the man Abram—that the crime committed by him has caused the misery of this innocent young woman: it is he who must clear her."

"There—there—you're all alike—all against him; a dear, noble fellow. But he'll overcome his enemies yet! Yes! if I sell my bed from under me, he shall. I don't want money; no, thank heaven, I don't want money."

"Don't, missus; don't," said Becky, whispering, and edging close to the widow.

"'Twill be all right enough, ma'am," said Traply; "never a doubt of it. Can't it be easily proved Mr. Abram was fifty miles from the place where the man was stopped, and the watch taken?"

"To be sure, no doubt," cried Mrs. Cramp. "*He* steal a watch! That noble, generous soul—with the sentiments he possesses! He'd have died first. Ha! they little know Edward; and so my good girl,"—and again the widow, in the very childish-

ness of her grief, turned to Patty—"so you can prove that you know nothing of him? That the watch found with you was given to you by somebody else—that however you came by it, dear Edward knew nothing of the matter?"

"I must beg your silence, madam. I have already told you, the young woman is a victim—a helpless, ignorant victim of the atrocity of the man Abram; and again I beg," said Inglewood,——

But he was permitted to say no more; for Mrs. Cramp, again bursting into a passion of tears, loudly exclaimed that everybody was set against the charming creature—that all the world thirsted for the life of her dear Edward.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MRS. CRAMP'S APPEAL TO PATTY.—VISIT OF A JEALOUS WIFE.

WHILST the widow recreated herself with her sorrows—for to me it seemed plain that she took a strange pleasure in declaring her wretchedness—I could perceive that Mr. and Mrs. Traply communicated with one another by frowns and pouts, and other expressive means known to the married; which looks and signs I readily interpreted into great discontent on the part of the turnkey at the presence of Patty and Inglewood; whilst poor Mrs. Traply, by the eloquent elevation of her eyebrows, asked as plainly as ever woman spoke, "How *she* was to help it?" The truth was, Mr. Traply had returned soured and disgusted to Newgate; for, as I afterwards discovered, the cart had been stopped in Oxford-road by a reprieve, and the horse's head turned towards the Old Bailey. Such an accident, especially in the winter season, was a mishap to ruffle the turnkey, who, as I heard him swear, vowed it "was only playing with people." Hence he had returned cold and hungry, and no promissory rabbit and onions prepared for the board. This incident was of itself enough to curdle the milky humanity of the officer. When, however, he saw Patty and Inglewood—from whom, with a fine instinct, he knew he could obtain nothing—when he saw them intruding upon Mrs. Cramp, who declared she had plenty of money, and whom, therefore, the man very naturally wished to have all to himself—he lost the patience which, by the very smallness of the stock, was so valuable to him, and relieved his bursting heart in contempt of Patty.

"All very fine, Mr. Parson—since you are one—all very fine, sir: but the young 'oman can tell what's what. Bless your heart! she's not such a fool—she can tell Newgate from pie-crust. She knows it wasn't Mr. Abram as give her the watch; and though she might turn king's evidence"——

"She'd never be such a wretch! Never swear away the dear man's life! Could you be such a monster?" exclaimed Mrs. Cramp, entirely losing herself in her fears for the highwayman. "No, no, you shall not leave me," cried the widow, as Patty moved towards the door; "you shall not quit this spot until you swear to me—and this kind gentleman will take your oath—until you swear to me that you'll preserve Edward." And with these words Mrs. Cramp seized Patty by the wrists, who meekly begged Traply to take her back into the prison. "Not till I have her oath! Not till I have her oath!" repeated the woman hysterically. Patty for a moment forgot her own miseries in pity of the forlorn condition of the widow. "Your oath, my dear, sweet girl, your oath, before this pious, reverend gentleman! Swear it, and I'll go upon my knees"——

And the widow, in the veriest imbecility, was about to prostrate herself, when Patty prevented her. "Be assured I will say nothing—*can* say nothing—to injure him," said the girl.

"But swear it! swear it!" cried Mrs. Cramp; who was for a moment interrupted in her violence by the return of Lintley. The apothecary had heard of the widow's consuming passion for the highwayman, and placing himself between her and Patty, he said——

"I am come from Mr. Abram."

"From dear Edward?" exclaimed the widow, "ha, the suffering martyr!"

"I have had some talk with him," said Lintley, "about the stolen property. He knows nothing of the watch, of course."

"I'll be sworn for him! A love!" cried Mrs. Cramp.

"Neither Patty, does he know anything of you. No: he does you this much justice; he says, though they hang him for the robbery, as far as lies in him, he'll acquit you."

"Hang him! He, a robber! Oh, trouble's turned the dear creature's brain. I see it. They'll drive him mad, and then make him say all sorts of things against his precious self. He steal a watch! I wouldn't believe it, though I saw him. No: I'd rather doubt my own eyes than him. But he'll be murdered; and for *her* sake—to save her. Yes, yes; I know it—I see it," and the poor widow, flinging herself in a chair, moaned piteously.

"Good bye, sir—good bye," said Patty to Lintley, as she endeavoured to hurry from the room. Then, after a moment, turning to Inglewood, she said, "Sir, I thank you for this kindness; and whatever may befal me, must think of it."

"Whatever may befal you," cried Inglewood, sadly, taking Patty's hand, "I will pray for the best; and whatever may befal you," he repeated with earnest yet trembling voice, "I will be here to sorrow or rejoice with you."

The tone in which Inglewood spoke—I could see it—thrilled the heart of Patty. New emotion seemed awakened within her. She was fixed to the spot—her eyes upon the ground—her face now red and pale. And Inglewood, with death in his aspect, gazed upon the hapless, persecuted girl, and for a moment his eye brightened, and he smiled as though he heard the whisperings of long-silent hope. To me, the couple were a touching sight. The girl, with affections deep as the sea, a wronged and blighted thing; doomed, it might be, to death made horrible by every circumstance of shame; the man, in the first strength of life, with the best nobility of heart; a gentle, upright, holy-minded being, surely withering to an early grave. And in these two, there were new-born hopes; affections for the first time known; a dream—a mocking vision that, for the moment, made the prison-place a paradise, and glorified the hideous present by the happy future. "And shall it be"—I communed with myself—"shall it be, indeed, a dream?"

"Come, Patty," said Lintley, not unobservant of the girl's emotion, "I will—with Mr. Traply's good leave—see you through the passage." And with this intention, Lintley, taking Patty's hand, was about to leave the room, when the door was flung open, and Mrs. Lintley—for she soon proclaimed herself—bounced before her husband. Poor Lintley! I could see it: he was a man of firm, yet gentle, temper; he was upon the noblest duty that can employ a human creature; that of administering sympathy and strength to the weak and suffering, and yet for an instant he looked confounded: had he been detected in the meanest act that could vulgarise life, he could not have looked more shamefaced. He had swallowed the bitterest drug in his shop, rather than the words—for well he knew their quality—of Mrs. Lintley.

Now, the apothecary's wife doated upon her husband; and such excess of affection was to her a sufficient reason that she should make him, now and then, extremely miserable. She employed her love upon her husband, as cats employ their claws upon a half-dead mouse; hence, she would make him keenly suffer her affection. In the first place it was with her an

enduring principle that every woman who saw Mr. Lintley—who, in truth, was a good-tempered, sweet-natured looking man, and no more—was from the moment incurably in love with him. Maids, wives, or widows, all were alike ready to sacrifice their hearts, their wedding-rings, and mourning-caps to the apothecary. It never for a moment struck Mrs. Lintley that by such belief she committed a grievous scandal upon all her sisterhood; certainly not; she never so far analysed her feelings; but lived on, with suspicion of all for her connubial creed. The ingenuity with which her jealousy would transform straws into poisoned daggers, and cobwebs into whips of steel, though highly creditable to the maker of the implements, was grievously painful to the sufferer. Let a girl, with a tolerably sparkling eye, enter the shop for some anodyne for tooth-ache: "Oh," in the words of the apothecary's wife, "there must be something in it!" Let her opposite neighbour have a pain in the head, and send for Mr. Lintley: why, "That woman was always having a pain in the head, and there must be something in it!" A poor widow could not summon Lintley to the spasms, but—"there must be something in it!" Nay, had the same widow broken a limb, and sent for Lintley, there would have been "something" even in a compound fracture. And then, Mr. Lintley had such an inveterate habit of feeling the pulse of a patient. "Could he not," asked Mrs. Lintley, at least when the sufferer was feminine, "could he not tell what was the matter without squeezing the woman's wrists? Oh, there must be something in it!" Many a time, when, after a hard day's drudgery—tramping through the mud and mists of London to his far-scattered patients, the worn apothecary had stretched himself in bed, and the sordid, miserable pettinesses of the world were melting in the balm of sleep,—many a time when that demon, lodged in the clapper of his night-bell, has called him from warm sheets into the raw, drizzling, wintry air, the apothecary's wife, ere the bell has ceased sounding, has declared it very strange "that all *his* labours should be at night: very strange, indeed; but it was plain enough—there must be something in it."

And this was the woman—the affectionate wife, for she was so, in her own persecuting way—who caught Mr. Lintley in the fact; apprehended him, with his fingers holding the fingers of Patty Butler.

"Now, Mr. Lintley, I'm satisfied, quite satisfied," and the little woman spoke as though she was chewing ground-glass. "Yes, I knew it—I was sure of it—I always said to myself, there must be something in it."

"My dear Nancy"— said Lintley, with his customary meekness.

"No, no, Mr. Lintley; not dear Nancy—but dear Patty," and then Mrs. Lintley smiled, as none but women can smile under such circumstances.

"I assure you, Mrs. Lintley,"—and Inglewood was about to intercede for his friend; but vain indeed his intercession.

"Oh! Mr. Inglewood, it's not for me to speak; but I really am ashamed of you. A parson—a minister of the Church—and here abetting a man—a husband and a father of a family—abetting him, I say, in such doings. The whole neighbourhood rings with 'em! It wasn't enough that I was to be insulted in my own house, but he must come to Newgate—among felons, and worse than that."

"Are you not ashamed, Nancy?" cried Lintley, and his colour rose.

"No, Mr. Lintley, I am not ashamed, nor you either, but you ought to be. I thought you had given this creature up, but"——

"Woman," exclaimed the apothecary, in a stern, commanding voice,—"for your foolish sayings, keep them for your own house, and for my ear—since I must hear them—for my ear alone. But I say to you, speak not a syllable, look not one affronting look against this poor wretched girl; this victim of ill-fortune; this patient, unrepining piece of goodness. At another time, your words would have been those of a silly woman; now do they sound as of a wicked one. Here is a poor, innocent, friendless soul, standing for what we know on the very edge of an untimely grave—yet standing with a courage and a meekness enough to put pity in the breast of a wolf—and yet you—you, a woman and the mother of future women, you with a vain and idle tongue must stab a heart the world so wickedly has bruised. Are you not ashamed? Blush, I say—blush, lest I despair of you."

The little woman was awed, conscience-stricken by the stern yet wholesome rebuke of her husband. She vowed she meant nothing in the world, only that she was never allowed to speak, and Mr. Lintley was always so violent. Then she dissolved into tears, at the same time declaring that she thought Patty the most innocent creature that ever broke the world's bread.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A CONSPIRACY AGAINST PATTY.—MORE VISITORS TO NEWGATE.—THE MISSES PEACHICK.

"DIDN'T you say you wanted to go into the prison?" asked Traply of Patty; for the turnkey became more impatient of the unprofitable delay of herself and friends. Patty instantly grasped the hand of Mrs. Lintley, and looking farewell to the apothecary and Inglewood, with a forced smile upon her face, hurried from the room, followed by Traply. "God help her!" exclaimed Lintley. "Amen—amen!" cried Inglewood, as from a writhing heart. Mrs. Lintley could say nothing; but weeping, placed her arm beneath her husband's, who, pressing it in token of conciliation, led her away. Nobody remained, save the widow, her maid Becky, and Mrs. Traply; the widow exclaiming against the stony-heartedness of all the world, and the turnkey's wife eloquently sympathising with her. The passion of Mrs. Cramp grew and grew with nursing; at length, in a paroxysm of love and grief, she vowed she would give her last shilling to the lawyers, rather than see her Edward murdered. He—the dear man!—had with his own sweet lips vowed to her his innocence; and yet the world was made up of such wretches, they would not believe him! Nevertheless, she would spend her last shilling upon him.

Poor, departed Mr. Cramp! How—thought I—would it irk your ghost, could it know that all the harvest of your daily shuffling—all the bright, bliss-bestowing guineas, for which for a long life you played at bo-peep with the devil,—all were to be emptied into the bags of law, to save a highwayman for your disconsolate mate! Had Joseph Cramp toiled, and edged, and scraped, and only to buy from Tyburn a husband for his widow? Surely, I thought, if elderly folk would now and then—whilst chaffering and fibbing in the world's market-place for the over-reaching pennyworth—now and then ponder on the future outlay of their gains when they themselves should be slabbed over with a flattering gravestone, they would let many a bargain slip, and with it many a sin! But no, with such folks the spirit of hard-dealing is a spirit hostile to death. It is impossible—thinks the hard huckster—that death should be so unmannerly as to *surprise* me in the middle of a bargain. No: with the miser,

every guinea got is a nail *out* of his coffin. And so, chuckling, he draws nail and nail, and promises himself the days of Methuselah, when abruptly comes Mr. Undertaker with his screw-driver—more certain implement than the sword of Cæsar.

Mrs. Traply was at length left alone, when, with housewife alacrity, putting her room straight, she placed me in a bureau amongst her other treasures. As she did so, she cried, "There's so many people about that Patty, she'll never be able to put it to rights. If she gets off, I dare say she'll be like the rest, and never think of the kindness she's had in Newgate; and if she shouldn't, why then the thing's impossible." It was thus the turnkey's wife speculated upon the life and death of Patty Butler—upon the condition of an ostrich feather!

I was shut up in an old wainscot bureau, through which the light glimmered in twenty cracks, though not sufficiently to allow me to discern surrounding objects. I could, however, distinguish nearly every word that was uttered, though the sound came to me somewhat muffled. Hence, there was enough to alarm me for poor Patty. One whole day I was left in continual terror. Poor, dear Patty! I pictured her to myself in that dreary prison, surrounded by objects of misery and vice in their thousand dreadful apparitions. I trembled for her: and then, remembering her sweet invincible patience, the mighty gentleness of her heart, I knew she would retire within her own nature, enshrined from prison-taint. I had no fear of the crystal purity of her soul, but I trembled for her life, and, indeed, with good cause, from the voices I heard about me. My first London purchaser, Shadrach Jacobs, the old Jew, was a visitor at the hearth of Mr. Traply. He had been shown Patty in the prison, and he could not be mistaken; no, he never was in all his life. And then, Mrs. Gaptooth would talk in a low voice to Shadrach, and afterwards laugh horribly. I shuddered, as I felt assured that the life of poor Patty was chaffered for by wretches. Then I heard Curlwell, in a voice of remonstrance, declare that he would have fair play; and then twitted by Mrs. Gaptooth, who would call upon him to be a man, and not be made a fool of by a brazen slut, he would vow "he'd rather see her hanged than see another man have her." Mrs. Gaptooth would then declare "she was too good for him, but he must have his own way. She had no spite against the wench for her impudence; none—she couldn't feel spite for the poorest thing in the world—it wasn't by no means in her natur; nevertheless she'd go and see her hanged with the greatest pleasure." The reader may believe that from these broken sentences, I could piece out sufficient to make me tremble for Patty.

Days passed on, and from what I could hear, the next day was appointed for the trial of Clickly Abram and his confederate, as she was called, Patty Butler. Now it was the custom of Mrs. Traply—I know not whether it be common with the sex—to visit the treasures in her bureau at least once a day. She would take up, and hang over, and smile and nod at various odds and ends of silk, and ribbon, and lace; and now and then sigh at an old fan, as though it brought back to her the days when she danced at Chester with Sir Mohawk Brush. The remnants of by-gone frippery, among which I was placed, seemed to tie poor Mrs. Traply to the out-door world. There were laces in that bureau, knitted up with the strings of her maiden heart. There were pieces of silk which reminded her of her lustrous youth, when Newgate was to her a fable; a gloomy dream; and nothing more. Then would she sigh, and that sigh spoke of sad experience of hard Newgate stones.

It happened then that Mrs. Traply, in a mild melancholy mood, took me, the morning before the trial, from my dark abiding-place. What she purposed with me I know not, but she was about to carry me from the room, when she was arrested in her intent by the sound of her husband. By the softened tones of his voice, I concluded that he was about to introduce Newgate visitors into his domestic retreat. I was right. The turnkey showed into his room three ladies and a gentleman; and as they entered, Mrs. Traply at the same time curtseyed, and flung me on the top of the bureau.

The male, and one of the female visitors, I immediately recognised as Mr. and Mrs. Flamingo, under whose auspices, it may be remembered, I was dressed for the Prince of Wales's cradle. They were accompanied by two elderly ladies; and I will here set down what I subsequently learned of them. They were maiden sisters, Miss Amelia and Miss Leonora Peachick, of Man-trap Park, in the county of Devonshire They seemed, at first sight, as indeed they afterwards proved, sweet, good-hearted old women. Age and celibacy had not soured their tempers, but mellowed them. I have, indeed, remarked through life, that, where the female heart withstands the withering, chilling influence of singleness, it becomes rich, ripened with a thousand virtues, that render it one of the noblest hearts of the world. And thus it was with the Misses Peachick. To this excellence, they united a simplicity of mind almost childish. They were both of an age not to be spoken of, and this was their first visit to London. To them life had been a tolerably long walk upon lamb's-wool; and they knew little of misery, save of that misery in novels, which is generally hung with golden fringe at the end.

Hence, in London, they were in a perpetual state of agitation, from the objects of crime and wretchedness which beset them. Every day they vowed they would start for Man-trap Park, there to end their days, forgetful, if possible, of the horrors they had seen; and every day Mr. and Mrs. Flamingo prevailed upon them to lengthen their visit; there was something yet so beautiful—so interesting, they *must* behold. What would their friends in Devonshire say, if they did not?

I know not if destiny had ordered it as a reward or trial of the virtues of the maiden Peachicks, that they should be sent as first-floor lodgers to the house of Flamingo; there, however, they were, and, under the potent persuasion of the feather-merchant, there they promised some time to remain. It was in vain that they protested they had seen enough of London; Mr. Flamingo knew better.

"No, no," cried the elder Miss Peachick, as she came timidly into the room, "I've had quite enough of this dreadful place. Dear me! Well, how anybody can live with bolts drawn upon them! And you mean to say, Mr. Flamingo, that all those men and women—the poor prisoners, Heaven bless 'em!—that they've all really done something wrong? They don't look like it. There must be some mistake."

"Most of 'em old hands, my lady," said Traply.

"Confirmed thieves and murderers," observed Flamingo, glibly.

"It can't be," cried Miss Leonora; "it's flying in the face of goodness to believe it."

"And is that poor woman a criminal, too?" asked Miss Amelia, pointing at Mrs. Traply.

"My wife, my lady," said the turnkey; and then added, with a grin, "sometimes a criminal for all that."

"Ha! and the good woman helps you to lock the poor things up, I suppose? And you live here, eh? Well, bless me! And you never let the prisoners out for an airing? They never take a ride, poor things?" asked Miss Leonora Peachick, in the innocence of fifty-three and rustic life.

"Never take a ride, my lady," answered Traply, that officer being mightily tickled by the simplicity of his guest; "never ride, 'cept when they go to be hanged."

"Don't talk in that way, my good man; it's impossible," cried Miss Amelia. "Why, you'll never tell me that they'll have the heart to kill any of those dear creatures we've just left. There's that sweet-looking little girl"——

"What, she? Click Abram's wife, as they call her? Ha, my lady!" and Traply tried to look grave. "Law's all luck; but if

she hasn't a good share of it, I wouldn't give the valley of a neck of mutton for hers.

"What! kill that innocent mild-looking!—Come away, Leonora; come away, child. Don't let us stop in this wicked place, for fear it should fall upon us."

"My dear madam," said Flamingo, "there's more to see yet."

"We've seen quite enough of London," cried Amelia.

"Quite," said Leonora; "and nothing that's innocent and fit for Christian people to see but the wax-work, Westminster Abbey, and"——

"The Tower and Bedlam is thought something of," said Flamingo, with a critical air.

"Oh! the king's crown and jewels are very well—very respectable, and all that. But, Bedlam!—Well, I do hope," cried Miss Amelia, with the tears nearly in her eyes—"I do hope that the poor people are really mad, for then they can't know how badly they use 'em."

"Come along. I shall die if I stop here," said Miss Leonora. "Pray, come, Mr. Flamingo."

"Certainly—to be sure; and then, on our way back, we can peep at the debtors through the bars of the Fleet. Bless you, ladies! you haven't half seen London; there's enough to delight you for a week."

The maiden sisters, without an answer, fluttered from the room, Mr. and Mrs. Flamingo, with suppressed laughter, following them; and Mr. Traply conveying to his wife, by the eloquence of his looks, the most contemptuous opinion of his visitors.

The day passed—the next day came. It was the first day of the sessions. Mrs. Traply had taken me from the top of the bureau, where I had remained from the first appearance of the Miss Peachicks. She stood, pondering, I know not what; holding me between her fingers, when her husband—it was a busy day—hurried in.

"There you are again, thinking o' nothing but that cust feather," he cried, snatching me from her hands, and about to throw me into the fire. He then paused, and thrusting me under his waistcoat, ran from the room, his wife vainly clamouring after him.

In a few minutes—for I could peep very well from the bosom of the turnkey—I was in the court of the Old Bailey.

It was the duty of Traply to stand in the dock near to the prisoners. He took his place close to Click Abram and Patty Butler—there and then arraigned before the Bench.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TRIAL OF CLICK ABRAM AND PATTY BUTLER.

As the highwayman glanced round the court, it was plain he felt the greatness of his reputation. He was to be tried before a most crowded and most fashionable assembly. His courtesies of Finchley and Hounslow had not been lost upon a reflecting world, that thronged to see a thief who robbed a lady of her watch, as though it had been her heart; who would pick a pocket with the like mingled grace and serenity with which a statesman would propose a money-bill. Clickly Abram had elevated his profession; he had made robbery like war,—at the worst, as people say, but a necessary evil. Hence, high and beautiful women had migrated from the west-end to the Old Bailey, and with scrutinising, sympathising eyes, saw the lion in the cage—the hero in the dock. Clickly Abram, with a smile of killing sweetness, laid his hand upon his breast, and bowed. He was dressed in the fullness of the mode. His linen—the gift of the widow—was of the finest web; and a diamond ring flashed upon the little finger of the highwayman's white right hand, which, with graceful negligence, he rested on the bar of the dock. A jeweller had visited Newgate to fit Mr. Abram with that ring; and thirty guineas, the late money of the late Mr. Cramp, had paid for it. If—I thought at the time—the perversity of an English jury should send the highwayman to that far country where the card-maker abided, what misery might the widow's lover wreak upon the husband ghost! But no; it was impossible. Hang such a man, with such a smile upon his face, such ruffles at his wrists, such a coat upon his back! No law could be so arrogant. Clickly Abram was not a thief. No; he stood in the dock a graceful, light-hearted gentleman, summoned for some good he had performed to receive a sentence of thanks from a grateful generation.

Patty stood beside the highwayman. She was pale, and, after a brief time, tranquil as a statue. When she entered the dock, a momentary blush, deep as blood, covered her face and arms; and she stood, struggling against the beating of her heart. The highwayman played his gallantry; for he bowed, and smiled very powerfully upon his fellow prisoner: he could not have been more polite to the widow at Ranelagh. The courtesy was,

however, cast away upon Patty. Though she thought not to vindicate her own guiltlessness by scorn of her companion, she stood in soul apart from him. She felt alone in that dock—alone with innocence.

I looked around the court, and to my surprise, saw many of my old acquaintances. Seated close to the bench, with her eyes upon the highwayman, was Lady Dinah Willoughby. She, of course, came to give a day's recreation to her breaking heart: she was there to solace her sorrow with a highwayman in jeopardy of Tyburn, as she would have regaled her poodle, the pupil of Mr. Spanneu, on the breast of a chicken. A trial for life or death was a tit-bit for what she thought her constitutional melancholy,

Not far from Lady Dinah sat the owners of Man-trap Park, the Miss Peachicks. They looked about the court; then in each other's face, then at the highwayman and Patty, then threw up their hands and eyes, and shifted in their seats, in a state of wondering agitation. In near neighbourhood to them were the Flamingos. I could see the feather-merchant look very judicial, as he scanned Patty, and then whispered something to his helpmate, who nodded in apparent affirmation. Flamingo was not a juryman; but he had already passed a verdict of guilty against the feather-dresser.

Mrs. Gaptooth, with a gleesome wickedness in her looks, was amongst the crowd, and Mrs. Traply, and honest Luke Knuckle. Poor fellow! he sat staring at Patty and vigorously gnawing his thumb-nail, unconscious of the feast.

There, too, was the widow Cramp, with the faithful Becky at her side. Poor widow! Tears had touched her beauty: her face looked scalded with weeping; and there, seeing nothing before her, but one form, one face, she sat working her pocket handkerchief into a ball, in her burning hand. Abram saw her and with a blithe look kissed his fingers towards her. The tenderness was too much for the poor creature; she broke into hysterical sobbing, whilst the homely Becky, with one tear trickling down her nose, took her mistress like a child to her bosom, and a man of office, with a fierce eye cast towards the mourner, bellowed out—"Silence in the court."

Lintley, his wife, and Inglewood were together. Once only did Inglewood exchange a glance with Patty. He then seemed to avoid her; seemed as though he had retired into his soul, and was there praying for her deliverance. The apothecary bowed to Patty, who meekly smiled; and little Mrs. Lintley herself allowed the recognition, never even hinting that "there must be *something* in it."

Mr. Curlwell was among the crowd, anxious and restless. Now he looked at Patty—now he blew his nose—and now he appealed for tranquillity to his snuff-box: that box—crested with a dolphin with tail in its mouth, Latin, and everything proper—which the valet had proclaimed in the round-house, on the night he had assaulted with his attentions the young feather-dresser in the Strand. Sure I am that that box smote Curlwell's conscience at the Old Bailey; and then he made himself comfortable with the thought, that if the girl would go to Tyburn and not to the church, the evil was all her own wicked wilfulness.

The trial began. The indictment charged Abram with stealing a watch and certain moneys on the highway, and Patty with aiding, abetting, and comforting the evil-doer.

The first witness called was one Andrew Bishop. He was a rough, dull-looking man, and stared doggedly about the court, as though the business therein transacted was wearying and contemptible. His examination, which I reduce to the main points, began. He had been supercargo to the *Mermaid:* she had sailed without him, and he had lost his berth, and all along of the damned watch and the trial. (Here the witness was rebuked by the Bench for bad language; whereupon, the witness scratched his head.) It was a gold watch, with a ship in the plate, pitching in a green sea, with the words *Such is life.* He had met the prisoner at the bar of a tavern, the Dog and Duck; thought him a jovial gentleman; he sang a good song. Witness left the tavern, and the prisoner went with him: went through a many places. At last, up somewhere by the Long Fields, when there was nobody by, the prisoner clapt a pistol to witness's skull, and said he must have all he had. And so the prisoner took it; and that was all witness knew—but that he'd swear to.

Mr. Clickly himself cross-examined the witness, and with an elegant subtlety of manner that would have honoured even the coif. In vain: the witness was too dull to be puzzled. He would not stir from two facts. The one, that Abram had put a pistol to his head; the other, that Abram had taken both his purse and his watch. Mr. Abram himself smiled pityingly upon the witness, and then smiled upon the jury: but it aided him not—Andrew Bishop, supercargo, remained fast to the two facts.

Shadrach Jacobs was the next witness, and proved that he had sold the watch to Bishop (a circumstance substantiated by the subsequent testimony of his daughter Miriam). He proved that he was present at the Dog and Duck with Bishop; that

there was a man, drinking and singing with the supercargo, very like the gentleman at the bar; certainly, very like him; but not the gentleman. There was a girl with the man; and that girl—Shadrach Jacobs would swear it—was the girl in the dock.

Here an ejaculation of disgust was heard from one of the audience, and the officer, looking in the direction of Luke Knuckle, exclaimed, "Silence in the court!" Curlwell, looking at Patty, seemed anxious and irresolute; and Mrs. Gaptooth leered and smiled.

And then came the evidence of Hardmouth and two of the watchmen. They had tracked the prisoner to his lodgings in Bloomsbury, whence he had escaped. They, however, found there the pocket-book (the money gone) and the watch of the prosecutor. The watch was found in the bed of the female prisoner, after Abram had escaped from the room.

Mrs. Crumpet, who declared that she believed Mr. Abram to be a perfect gentleman, deposed that he had lodged in her house. Never knew anything irregular in him. Would have trusted him with untold gold. The young woman at the bar had been a long time sick; and, when the robbery was committed, was in bed. Could not, certainly, explain how the watch was found with Patty.

Three others—witnesses for Mr. Abram—courageously swore that, on the night of the robbery, the maligned prisoner was at Gloucester. I could perceive that the widow, albeit she looked wonderingly at these witnesses, looked not with displeasure.

Mr. Lintley bore testimony to the worth, the goodness of Patty; and Mr. Flamingo, who had been hunted out and compelled to attend by the apothecary, deposed that he thought the female prisoner a very honest woman; and then, on cross-examination, allowed, with great alacrity, that she had been once in the round-house; that there *had* been a charge against her—something about a snuff-box.

"But that man knows it was all a lie," cried Luke Knuckle from the gallery, pointing to Curlwell.

"Remove that man!" said the judge to the officer of the court; but Luke did not wait to trouble that functionary. Mr. Lintley, however, immediately communicated with the counsel; and when Flamingo's examination was over, Julius Curlwell was called and sworn. It was very true, he owned, he had made a false charge—he had found his box—in fact, he had himself addressed, not assaulted, as the counsel said, the girl in the street. It was true he had offered to marry her; since—yes, he would not deny it—

he loved her very much. Had never said he could save her if he would. Knew Shadrach Jacobs—but knew no harm of him; would swear—that is, he was almost sure he would—that he had never met the Jew about the trial. Knew a woman Gaptooth (here that excellent matron elbowed her way out of court); thought her character tolerably good; she had been two or three times indicted; would not swear that he had not sent messages by her to the prisoner at the bar; they were not dishonourable messages—that is, they were messages that gentlemen sometimes sent to young women.

Here Curlwell's examination terminated; that is, he was taken off the rack. He had a quick-witted counsel and his own conscience against him. Hence the valet turned pale and red, and shuffled and stammered, and grinned vacantly, and whined, and so laid bare before the court the miserable nature of Julius Curlwell. There never was a more pitiable picture of a weak, dissolute creature. When released from the torture of self-delineation, the valet, with the sweat running from his brow, ran from the court. His evidence had done much for the cause of Patty. Lintley—I saw it—thought so; for he smiled and grasped Inglewood's hand, and Mrs. Lintley herself nodded cheeringly to "the female prisoner at the bar."

And now was Abram called upon for his defence. Leaning forward, he made a sort of sweeping bow to the whole court; and then, with a condescending air, began. "My lord and gentlemen of the jury," said the highwayman, "whilst I regret that the inconvenience of being in this place should have fallen to your humble servant, I cannot but feel that there are circumstances which, at the first blush, demanded, for the satisfaction of justice, that I should be so placed. A robbery has been committed, gentlemen, there can be no doubt of that; the prosecutor, a most intelligent, and I am sure, very honourable man, was despoiled of his money and his watch. He has sworn that I am the robber; and I believe, gentlemen, that he believes he has sworn truly. But, is the fact supported by corroborative testimony? Mr. Jacobs, a merchant of high standing, distinctly states that I was not present at the Dog and Duck; but that a man, unfortunately like me, was: I must say," and the speaker smiled, "unfortunately for me, in this case. Three other respectable men swear, that on that very night I was at Gloucester. Gentlemen of the jury, I WAS! It is true the watch was found at my lodgings: but Mrs. Crumpet lets her every room. It has been said, I was lying concealed there. Gentlemen, it is true: and why? I was a little in debt—I own it with a blush—a little in debt. Gentlemen, I leave my case to your own intelligence. You will not find me

guilty of felony, because I happen to resemble some unfortunate man; you will not hang me for a likeness;" and Mr. Abram tried to be jocular; "you will not find me guilty for having the same eyes, and nose, and mouth, as a highwayman, for such indeed is proved my only offence; no, gentlemen, you value your own peace of mind—you value your own night's rest, the rest of your wives and your families; and above all, you value truth; in which case, gentlemen of the jury, without one anxious thought, do I leave my fate in your hands. I know what your verdict must be, and in the tranquillity of innocence await it."

There was a buzz, a murmur of applause, at the eloquence, the self-possession of the speaker, who bowed acknowledgment. The widow Cramp looked smilingly about.

Patty was then called upon. Her defence was, simply—"Not guilty."

The judge briefly summed up; and, as I thought, bore hard upon Click Abram: that person, however, seemed to think otherwise: for whilst the jury was retired, he lounged against the side of the dock, and employed himself by trimming his filbert nails.

The jury returned into court. The verdict was given. "Clickly Abram, guilty; Martha Butler, not guilty."

A loud shriek rang from the gallery; and then poor Mrs. Cramp, screaming "Murder, murder!" fell in the arms of her faithful handmaid. The highwayman paused, as he was about to turn from the dock, and a momentary look of anguish possessed him, as he gazed upward at the suffering widow.

Mr. and Mrs. Lintley, Inglewood, and lastly the two Miss Peachicks, crowded their way to the dock, to grasp the hands of Patty.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I AM TAKEN TO DRURY-LANE THEATRE, AND BECOME PART OF ITS WARDROBE.—THE PLAY-HOUSE BEHIND THE SCENES.

TRAPLY, by duty of his office, retired with Click Abram and Patty from the dock into the prison. The highwayman, rallying his courage and his gallantry, begged to congratulate the girl on her escape. "Gad's me!" he cried, "I'm glad of it, though I lose the honour of your company to Tyburn. Yet, curse the jurymen! To have one's dinner spoilt by such a set of block*heads!* Buttermen and shoemakers to hang a gentleman!"

And then Abram burst into a wild and hollow laugh to show his fine philosophy.

"Miserable man!" cried Inglewood; "your grave is dug; your knell about to toll; death is staring in your face. Wretched creature, would you jest with God?"

Abram started at this passionate reproof of Inglewood, whose pale thin cheek was flushed and quivering with emotion; and then the highwayman, summoning his contempt, stared at the intruder, and executed a long, loud whistle. Inglewood, with sorrow in his face and voice, raised his hands and cried, "Heaven be merciful to you!" He then joined Mr. and Mrs. Lintley and the Miss Peachicks, all of whom were congratulating and caressing Patty. The maiden sisters were weeping—joyously weeping; and Mrs. Lintley declared that Patty should go home with her; she was such a good, innocent creature, and would bring a blessing upon any house. Then Lintley smiled, and Miss Amelia Peachick, slipping a guinea into Traply's hand, begged him to send for a coach. As for Miss Leonora, I heard her whisper to her sister, that "she hoped no harm could come to the poor creature who was found guilty; they had, no doubt, only done it to frighten him."

Traply departed on his errand: as he hurried away, I caught a glance of Inglewood; he stood somewhat apart from the group, gazing at Patty—his heart in his eyes. And thus I left him.

When the turnkey returned to his wife, he was so mollified by the harvest of the day, that although he had entirely forgotten me, he suffered his spouse to remind him of his brutality with no other reply than a jocose growl; and delivered me—bent and rumpled, and, as his spouse said, not fit for any Christian to wear—into the hands of his helpmate. I was curious to learn the condition of Mrs. Cramp, but heard nothing more than, as Traply reported at supper, that she had been "a crying and a melting over Click like butter." The next morning Mrs. Traply left Newgate, carrying me with her.

In a few minutes, I found myself consigned to the hands of a feather-cleaner in Shoe-lane, with an injunction from Mrs. Traply to be put in order without delay. "It's been a handsome thing in its time, but, like most of us, a little tumbled and worse for wear," said an old woman, the shopkeeper, and as I found, an acquaintance of her customer. "Ha! Mrs. Briggs, when I wore that feather at Chester," cried Mrs. Traply. "Well, well, you may say tumbled;" and, with a significant toss of the head, the turnkey's wife departed, I suppose for Newgate. "She's a nice

cretur, she is," said Mrs. Briggs to her dirty shop-girl; "she wear a feather! I'll be bound for 't got out of some poor thing in trouble—some dear soul in gaol."

About a fortnight passed, in which time I was cleaned and set in order, and, as I thought from a glance of myself in a glass, made to look as beautiful as ever. Alas! was I to carry my whiteness back to Newgate? Fortunately, no. Mrs. Briggs was a shrewd shopwoman. She had mislaid or lost an excellent feather brought, among others, by a large customer, and she resolved that I should take the place of the missing goods. "As for Mrs. Traply," said her acquaintance, Mrs. Briggs, "she might be put off with anything, and never know any better. Now, Mr. Garrick was so partic'lar."

My heart throbbed at the words. Was I to become the property of Mr. Garrick? Was I to go upon the stage? Having played my part above the cradle of a real Prince of Wales, was I to wave amongst kings and princes of sixty shillings per week? These thoughts possessed me, as I lay in a bundle upon a shelf, among other feathers of all kinds and colours; when, after an anxious three days, I felt myself carried out of the shop with my companions. In a short time, I found myself at the stage-door of Drury-lane Theatre. My bosom beat and glowed, for I was among his Majesty's servants!

Assuredly, there is something subtly intoxicating in the air of a theatre. I had no sooner passed the vestibule of the play-house, than I felt myself an exceedingly great creature. My every filament seemed to expand with new dignity; I felt myself swelling like a cat's tail. It is the atmosphere, I thought. It is the air, impregnated with the spirit of poetry—of mighty thoughts, that gives an elevation, a largeness of manner, even to the door-keeper. The place seemed to me a sort of half-way house, between the sordid homeliness of the world and the revealed glories of the land of romance. I felt drunk; but the intoxication was delicious.

I was soon deposited in what I found to be the ladies' wardrobe. Looking about me, I discovered more than one old acquaintance in the gowns I had fallen among at Madame Spanneu's. There was my old friend, the lutestring, at times devoted to the nightly service of Mrs. Clive; Mrs. Pritchard was wont to wear the pompadour; and the smoke-coloured cloak had graced the fair shoulders of the gentle Mrs. Abington. I nodded to them; and at night began to talk to them as old acquaintances. They, however, treated me contemptuously as a new-comer and a nobody; desiring me to remember that all the town was mad after them; that, indeed, the world itself could not turn

round without them. Snubbed, I was compelled to hold my peace, or now and then to have a whispering chat with a shabby old blue boddice, commonly worn, as it informed me, by the meaner people of the playhouse. "I have never yet opened my mouth upon the stage," said the boddice to me in a tone of melancholy: and when I begged to be further informed of its meaning, it assured me that it was only worn by the girls who acted speechless peasants and tongue-tied domestics. "Bless you," it sighed, "I have never yet been into the first green-room; but have merely stared at it with all my eyelet-holes, as I have passed on and off with the mob. Now, you," said the boddice, "you are sure to have better luck. I shouldn't wonder to see you very soon as Mrs. Oakley, or the Queen, in Hamlet. I," said the boddice, heaving a deep sigh, "I have never known the sweets of a round of applause in all my life; now, you'll have it —hot as you can sup it." I confess it, I was in a flutter of delight at these words; though from what I heard from every piece of raiment that opened its lips, I conceived a deep aversion for Mr. Garrick. No one had a civil syllable for him. "Are managers," I asked of the boddice, "always such wicked people; such tyrants, such knaves, such shufflers, such hypocrites?" The boddice made answer, with significant emphasis, "My dear, always."

"Kitty, was the house good to-night?" asked the pompadour of the lutestring, or rather Mrs. Pritchard of Mrs. Clive, for I shall give to the garments the names of the ladies who sometimes wore them.

"Quite good enough," answered Clive. "That Jew, Garrick, acts worse and worse."

"Now, Kitty," cried Mrs. Abington, in the gentlest voice, "why will you abuse David? I'm sure he loves you like a brother."

"Yes, as brother Cain loved brother Abel," replied Kitty. "Love me! Didn't the wretch take me out of Miss Prue, and the romps I've played for thirty years? Had the impudence to talk of my age. He doesn't see the wrinkles in his own face— as deep and as black as a coal-pit. Why didn't the 'sick monkey' stay in Italy? I could kiss Beard for having driven him out of the country with cat-gut. The brute! Took me out of Miss Prue! Why doesn't he take himself out of Ranger?"

"But then, you know, love," observed Mrs. Yates, represented by a white satin petticoat, "you know he's a manager." At this all the ladies laughed in chorus.

In a short time I learned all the past and present politics of

the playhouse. Poor Mr. Garrick had been twanged away from tragedy by the fiddles of Mr. Beard, at Covent Garden. Arne and Artaxerxes had been too much for David and Shakspeare; and so the manager had fallen conveniently sick—"The rosin-sickness, my dear," as I heard Mrs. Clive declare—and sought the restorative air of Italy and France. "I wish, when they had him abroad, they'd have made him a cardinal," cried Mrs. Pritchard. "Yes," chimed in Clive, with a chuckle, "or a rabbi; I'm sure they'd have found him Jew enough."

I own I felt myself delighted with the sallies of these ladies, and of Clive in particular; for though she was always the loudest in her abuse of Garrick, it seemed more as an exercise of her vivacity than of spleen. She called him a Jew—a tyrant—a Turk—a devil; but she did so with a laugh that turned her bitterest words into sugar-plums.

"It must be a delicious life, that of an actress," I whispered, one evening, when all was silent, to my friend, the boddice.

"I dare say it is," was the answer; "but I know it's terrible work to be as I am. Nobody ought to be so miserable a nobody as the nobody of a theatre; only," added the boddice, "in a theatre nobody ever thinks itself nobody. There's the little girl who wore me last night. Poor soul! she has a few shillings a week; and is, indeed, as good and meek a little creature as ever bore spangles. Yet, when even the king and queen come to the house, does she think herself one of the chief attractions of the show."

"Is it possible?" I cried. "What folly!"

"And, after all," said the boddice, "is it not well that it is so? Conceit to a player must be as oil to a machine; a thing necessary to keep the engine harmoniously at work, to prevent the grinding, clanging friction that else must follow. The lower the actor, too, the greater the need of such oil. And nature is kind," added the boddice; "in such cases, it generally happens, the greater the want, the greater the supply."

"I see not the necessity," I observed.

"That comes of your ignorance of stage life," replied the boddice; "nay, I might add of life in almost every variety. Is there so hard a lesson for a man to con as to learn that he is nobody? In a playhouse it is especially difficult. Here, strange as it may seem, men are kept in stirring spirits by a lively sense of their wrongs. Like eels, they are made the more vivacious by skinning. The man who plays Catesby to Garrick's Richard believes, but for the tyranny of fate, he could play Richard every bit as well, if not better, than the manager. He recollects the applauses of his youth from rustic hands; he remembers how he

made certain barns echo and vibrate, and he thinks with pity of a London audience and Mr. Garrick. Now, make Catesby know his real worth, and you make him a miserable creature. Let a man unconsciously offer a counterfeit guinea, in his ignorance he will throw it with an air upon the counter; and when accused of the attempt to pass a pocket-piece, fly into a tempestuous passion, making loud assertions of his honour and gentility. Let the same man, if he can persuade himself to the act, knowingly offer the bad coin, and with what a poor, sneaking grace will he acquit himself! Now, the Catesby I speak of, and such actors, never will be persuaded that their Richards are pocket-pieces. No; they are gold—best Mint gold; but it is the perverseness, the injustice of men, that flings them back upon their hands. They are, however, rich that they themselves possess them, although refused by all the world. Prove the pieces brass or copper, make their holders know as much, and they, in that knowledge, would be 'poor indeed.'"

"I understand," I replied. "In truth, I have fallen amongst a strange prople."

"Nay, if they have follies, weaknesses—and who has not?—to laugh at, there are virtues, even in a playhouse soil, to praise and venerate."

"Virtues!" I cried, and I am afraid with a slight laugh.

"Listen," said the boddice. "I spoke of Fanny Davis, the little girl who last night wore me. I will tell you a short, a very short history, of that gentle, that heroic child."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SOMETHING MORE OF FANNY DAVIS.—THE POOR ACTOR'S HOME.—MISS GAUNTWOLF.

"Fanny Davis," continued the boddice, "is only now in her seventeenth year; and for her salary, she may, perhaps, have as many shillings as years. Yet is she the most discreet, the most gentle of creatures. Her first baby recollections are of the playhouse. From the first hour she could balance herself upon her two feet, Fanny was an actress. Ere she had been twenty months in the world's theatre, she was a little toddling fairy at one shilling per night. Being the child of poorest actors—folks just trusted with syllables in London—her baby earnings were

precious silver drops in the small household cup of her parents. Hence, too, she had no real childhood. Happily for her, she was not an infant wonder. She was not taught to think herself a little lump of brain in red shoes; a dwarfed woman housed in the image of an infant. Oh, those baby prodigies!" cried the boddice.

"Baby prodigies!" I echoed in my ignorance.

"Comedy and tragedy queens of six years old," said the boddice. "Creatures made to chew Shakspeare with their pap; poor little souls forced out of babyhood to mum maturity. And they catch a trick of it, poor things; and full-grown babies stare, and applaud, and whoop at the miracle, as doubtless Adam wondered when the first parrot cried 'Pretty Poll!' To make a prodigy of this sort, you must first kill the baby. Depend upon it, these doings are child-murders, with only this difference—they escape the coroner. Happily, I say then, Fanny Davis was none of these. She was not fed on the applauses of an audience—she was not brought up by the clapping hands of a wise and discerning public. To this moment she has never heard her voice upon the stage, but is accounted no more of than a part of the human furniture which makes up the train of queens and princesses; is now one of a mob of happy villagers, and now a silent chambermaid. Hence, to Fanny there is no hope—none. She can never be an actress—never anything but a sort of fringe upon an actress's robe. Her seventeen shillings per week may have increase of three—and there, in the playhouse at least—must the hopes of Fanny rest. And the best of it is, dear creature, she knows this, and in all her poverty is blithe as a robin in December."

"Is she pretty?" I asked.

"Very beautiful," answered the boddice; "and therefore in this place has need of a stout heart and constant spirit. Mr. Garrick is somewhat particular, and doesn't let the wild fellows of the town sharpen their wits upon the actresses—he doesn't suffer his green-room to be a place of ease to other places; nevertheless, he can't stop letters, and presents in them, with promises and kickshaws that catch poor butterfly girls. Generally one a night of these things comes to Fanny, and still it is refused. Only two nights since, a note was offered her. 'I know nobody to write to me,' she said. 'But it is of consequence, Miss Davis,' said the bearer. 'Is it so, indeed?' cried Fanny, 'then pray take it to my father.' Bless her!" cried the boddice, "I hugged her for the moment all the closer for it."

"A sweet thing, indeed," said I. "How I should like to see her!"

"In good time," observed the boddice. "But I haven't told you half. Though I loved the dear child from the first time she wore me, I knew not her full worth until about a fortnight ago. 'Tis a touching story, though indeed there's little in it."

"Tell it me," I cried impatiently.

"Last Thursday week," said the boddice, "I was worn by Fanny, who, I observed, looked ill—very ill. Poor child! She was hoarse—almost inarticulate; and, I could feel, burnt with a fever. Several of the ladies—for Fanny is a general favourite—spoke to her, and begged her to go home. Still she answered with a smile, faint enough, that it was nothing—it would pass off—she should be better. At length, dear Mrs. Clive called the under-prompter to Fanny. 'This dear child must go home—she sha'n't stay here.' 'Well,' said the prompter, 'she had better take off her dress, and—' 'Dress! Don't talk to me of your rags, man; she sha'n't stop an instant. Here, Nell!' and Clive called to her maid, 'wrap her up warm in my cloak—get her things together, and—you, Bob, go for a coach!' she said to one of the men. 'And mind, Nell, you take her safe home, and say I shall come and see her in the morning.' Now, Mrs. Clive," said the boddice, "is not a woman to be denied anything; even David shakes before her; and so, in a very few minutes, Fanny, well wrapt up, was in a coach on her way home, and Nell with her. I found Fanny's dwelling-place humble enough, but clean and orderly. There were five children, all much younger than herself, at home. Fanny's mother had some time since quitted the stage, as she says, to look after her family. Poor soul! this is a bit of professional pride: the stage quitted her. Her first hold upon it was merely a pretty face and slim figure, and as bloom and slimness departed, why, the stage slipped from her, and she then said it would be cheaper for her to look to her children at home, than to remain in the profession. Mr. Davis, with conjugal pride, is wont to speak of the sacrifice that Mrs. Davis has made for her family; what she might have been, had she continued on the boards, nobody could tell. However, there was no arguing with a mother's heart; the dear soul would have her way, and—it *was* a sacrifice—but she has it. Mr. Davis had an uncertain nightly salary at Covent Garden, which he always speaks of as our house, though it is now three years since he belonged to it. Poor fellow! He is an honest, worthy creature, devoted to his wife and children, and by such devotion enabled to bear much. He and Mrs. Davis think each other the greatest artists in the world. Hence have they enjoyment—with only a handful of sleepy fire in the winter's grate, and with pale-

faced children about them—to talk of the triumphs of one another in the country."

"Is it possible?" I asked.

"True, I assure you; and a great solace it is to them. I remained about a week in their lodgings, and heard them at it every day. 'Well, John,' Mrs. Davis would begin, 'I saw *Hamlet* last night. People may call it a wife's prejudice, but 'twas nothing like your *Hamlet* at Cranbrook. I shall never forget that point of yours at the *Ghost's* speech, "I am thy father's spirit." As for Garrick, he quite missed it.' 'It's very odd, Mary,' said Davis, 'I was just then thinking of the new *Juliet*, and your *Juliet* at Gravesend. That line of yours—' 'What line, John?' Mrs. Davis asked with the prettiest innocence. 'Oh, my dear, that line that struck the mayor so much—"As with a club dash out my desperate brains!" There, Mary, though you're my own wife, I will say it, you went quite through the heart. The poor girl of the other night scarcely touched one's waistcoat.' And thus," said the boddice, "the happy pauper couple are wont to flatter one another."

"With an empty cupboard, 'tis as you say, a great solace, and may serve them somewhat instead of beef and ale," said I.

"Yes," answered the boddice, drily; "but they cannot feed the little Davises after that fashion. However, to my story of Fanny. Her poor mother was dreadfully alarmed when the girl was brought home. 'Oh,' she cried, 'those shoes—those dreadful shoes! I knew she'd catch her death!' This made me look at the shoes, which, with Fanny's street attire, Mrs. Clive's maid brought with her. They were worn thin as paper; and though stitched and stitched, there were treacherous holes at the sides to let fever and death in from the cold wet street. Poor thing! in those reeking shoes had she that day stood three hours at rehearsal. 'My dear Fanny!' cried Mrs. Davis, with all the mother in her face. 'Oh, I shall be quite well to-morrow; I shall indeed. I am not so ill now—'twas only Mrs. Clive would make me come home,' said Fanny. 'And she'll be here ma'am, she bid me say, in the morning,' cried Nell, who then returned to her mistress. Mrs. Davis assisted Fanny to bed; and then, with heavy heart, rocking her youngest child to sleep, awaited the coming of her husband, who heard the story of Fanny's illness with tearful eyes; and swore that, come how they might, new shoes should come to-morrow. Poor, penniless player! I shall never forget the wretched, bewildered look with which he turned and turned over each shoe. 'I knew 'twould come to this—I was sure of it,' he said, with anxious voice; and then again and again he handled the shoes; again looked at every flaw;

and again and again heaving a sigh, dropt them at his feet. He then sat moodily looking at them for two or three minutes, and then leaping up, cried out, 'My God! that I should lose a child —and such a child—for a pair of shoes!' I have seen many a tragedy acted," said the boddice, "have many a time heard Garrick's soliloquy on death—it never touched me half so much as that poor player's grief on two old shoes."

"And Fanny?" said I, impatiently.

"She was better—so much better in the morning," answered the boddice, "that she resolved to go to the theatre. The streets were quite dry, she said, and she could get no hurt. Her father had gone out to borrow money for new shoe-leather, and her mother—as I think—upon the same fruitless errand. Fanny sat by the fire, with one of her little sisters in her lap; and her shoes—the fatal pair—were still upon the hearth. A sharp, short rap struck the door, which, ere one of the children could reach, was opened, and Miss Gauntwolf entered."

"And who is Miss Gauntwolf?" I asked.

"I forgot: you have not yet seen her. She is a girl in the theatre, in the same rank, and receiving about the same salary as Fanny."

"I perceive," said I; "Fanny's friend."

"Certainly not," said the boddice: "save on the business of the house, they never speak. Poor sold thing! but you shall hear all in time. Miss Gauntwolf entered the room in a very cloud of musk. She was—as, indeed, she always is—magnificently dressed, in a sack of rich sky-coloured satin, with cloak and bonnet, and the prettiest shoes to match. 'Miss Gauntwolf,' cried Fanny, colouring, and setting down her sister.

"'My dear creature,' cried the young lady, 'I saw you were very ill last night; and you know, I couldn't rest this morning till I came to see you. My dear soul! you don't take care of yourself. You don't wrap yourself up enough this dreadful weather. Now look at me, I always muffle—always—though I never stir out but in the carriage'"—

"Carriage! Did you not say the young lady had only seventeen shillings a week?" I asked.

"Seventeen shillings," answered the boddice gravely, and then proceeded with the talk of Miss Gauntwolf. "'Now, my dear, I hope you are better—much better,' and the visitor pouted her pretty lips, and threw a look of concern into her ready doll's face, as she gazed at Fanny.

"'Better, much better,' answered Fanny, rising.

"'Now, don't get up—don't use any ceremony with me. The truth is, I came in the hope of finding you well enough to go to the house. My dear, they do work us to death at that theatre,

and so I've told his lordship over and over again; so that if you were recovered, I'd take you in my carriage. There is only my dear father in it,' said Miss Gauntwolf.

"'Your father in the carriage?' said Fanny coldly.

"'That's all; and he's nobody you know—so there's a sweet creature—do come,' said Miss Gauntwolf.

"'I thank you,' said Fanny, 'I must wait for my mother.'

"'Now,' urged the young lady, 'I'm sure that's unnecessary. Do come.'

"Fanny resolutely shook her head.

"'But why not? Well, you are such a strange girl! Such a day as this—and you so weak, so ill; and there's a warm seat in the sweetest carriage in the world, and'—

"'I'd rather walk,' said Fanny firmly.

"'You'd rather walk!' exclaimed Miss Gauntwolf.

"'Much rather,' repeated Fanny.

"'Well, you are the strangest girl,' again said Miss Gauntwolf, piqued by Fanny's resolution. And then, at a loss for further arguments, Miss Gauntwolf sat in silence at the fireside, and listlessly, with her pretty blue satin slipper, pushed at Fanny's leathern shoe.

"Ha, my friend!" I cried to the boddice, "what a picture of ulcerous misery and noble truth is there! Oh that silly satin slipper, that would at all cost ride,—and that heroic, worn-out leathern shoe, that in all weathers, would—rather walk!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

I GO UPON THE STAGE.—THE GREEN-ROOM.—THE ACTORS.—MR. GAUNTWOLF AND A PINCH OF SNUFF.

In the midst of our conversation, my new acquaintance and myself were separated by one of the wardrobe women, and, for the time, I heard no more of Fanny Davis or Miss Gauntwolf. A few days passed, and, to my exceeding delight, I was selected by Mrs. Clive, and was to appear the next night before the king and queen, in the head of *Bizarre* in Farquhar's comedy of *The Inconstant*. Many little incidents, much gossip, which fell to my knowledge in my progress from the wardrobe to the boards, I pass in silence. My sensations, upon first entering the green-room, were delicious. I was in fairy-land. Even though I had passed through the disenchanting atmosphere of a dressing-

room, I looked upon every actress as very near a heathen goddess; and Garrick and Aiken were more than mortal men. Indeed, at first, there seemed to me an air of romance about the meanest person—a something that took them away—set them apart from common life. The very stage carpenters were not, to my intoxicated fancy, the mere mechanics of the outer world. And then the ease, the hilarity of the green-room! The free and mirthful intercourse of men and women! Nothing prim or ceremonious in any of them; but, as I thought, a large, happy family of privileged mortals delighted to delight the world; folks, whose hardest labour was most delicious excitement; whose lives were passed in communicating pleasure, and receiving thereby the sweetest plaudits, and the most approving smiles. I felt this; I, who had seen palace-life; I, who had been familiar with the breath and looks of royalty! Whether it was that I associated the words of Shakspeare with Garrick, I cannot clearly say; but sure I am, I often thought the actor more of a king than King George the Third. Mrs. Yates, too! There was such inborn grace in that gentle creature; and fair Abington, with her sweet, liquid voice, and dove-like looks; and charming Mrs. Barry; and kind, womanly Pritchard; and out-speaking, pure-hearted Kitty Clive, who would beard the terrible manager, and then bestow the kindest words and thoughts upon the poorest underlings—the meek and pauper Fanny Davises: and there were, *and are*, many, many such, who, looking down temptation with virtuous looks, are made, by their weekly shillings—wages earned in a fiery furnace—meek-hearted ministrants of daily bread to a whole family. I have known many scenes of life, but none in which the filial principle more nobly—nay, in few so nobly—exercised itself as among players, from high to low; the "vagabonds" branded in the statute. Many a time has the house rung with plaudits of Mrs. Cibber, in her sweet devotion, as the self-denying child! And at that moment, among the few girls, the attendants of the scene—the creatures upon whom undistinguishing profligacy in the boxes would set a price—were those, who practised in the hard prose of life the lovely fable of the poet. Believe it, reader; I have known Cordelias in cotton gowns, and Grecian Daughters in pattens.

Let me, however, return to the green-room. As I have said, for some time all the actors appeared to me creatures of another world—men and women elevated above common life. At last, I discovered that I had confounded them with their stage-characters. It required, indeed, a strong effort to separate the two. Garrick would be a hero—Mrs. Cibber a heroine. They dwelt in a cloud of rainbow fiction, cast by poetry around

them. Or I have sometimes thought the actor—that is, the mere word-speaker, who brings no great original mind to his task—the jackdaw that, innocent of the larceny, is, nevertheless, the jackdaw always dressed in the feathered pens of authors. (Observe, gentle reader, I would not utter this opinion in a green-room. More; should destiny, in its benevolence, ever again lead me into that elysium, it is an opinion I would there and then most vigorously deny.) It is so difficult for the common mind to disunite the hero and the actor—to wipe off every particle of rouge, and pick off every spangle.

"Mrs. Clive," cried the call-boy; and oh! how my heart beat as *Bizarre* carried me upon her head to make my first appearance on the stage. Their Majesties were in the royal box; but in the days I write of, this was a common event. Nevertheless, half St. James's was in the theatre; and at different intervals of the night, half the ministry in the green-room. Pelham chatted familiarly with Barry; and Marquesses and Lords formed about Garrick, as though, indeed, king David held a real levee in the playhouse.

"Mrs. Clive," again cried the call-boy; for Kitty was talking and laughing to one of his Majesty's equerries; "Mrs. Clive, act drop's up, ma'am," was the summons; when Mrs. Clive, *Bizarre*, and Mrs. Abington, *Oriana*, hurried from the green-room, and Clive had scarcely time enough to say to her friend, "What an ass that colonel is, my dear!" ere both the ladies were upon the stage. Shall I ever forget the sensation? I was sick, and dizzy, and blind. As for the folks in front, I could distinguish no one. I saw nothing but a huge, black, moving mass—a vast one thing heaving about, and making a noise; for the applause, which in my folly I took at first wholly to myself, when Clive entered, was excessive. When it had ceased, and I had a little recovered myself, I heard the king (and so must all the audience) say to the queen, "That's Clive—Clive—clever woman Clive; good character—good character—good woman, good woman." For a moment, I felt confused that their Majesties, who must so often have seen me when I adorned the Prince of Wales, should behold me on the stage. Poor vanity! how, indeed, should they know me?

When Clive made her exit, she was stopped at the wing by Miss Gauntwolf, who was to play one of the two ladies who assist *Bizarre* in her little plot against *Duretête*. It was a great night for Miss Gauntwolf; for she was for the first time entrusted with two lines: yes, she had on that night to make what we must call her virgin speech, as the first Lady. The second (dumb) Lady

was given to Fanny Davis. "Do you like my dress, Mrs. Clive?" asked Miss Gauntwolf, with a fainting air; the two lines she had to deliver making her an object of exceeding interest to herself. "Humph!" said Kitty, looking the lady up and down, and then looking her through, "Why, child," and Clive seized her by the ear, whereat sparkled a very handsome diamond, "whose is this?" "Mine, ma'am," answered Miss Gauntwolf, softly. "Indeed," and Clive took a long breath. "And this ring?" "Mine, ma'am." "And this necklace?" "Mine, ma'am." "All this finery yours, child?" cried Kitty; and then she asked in a voice cold enough to freeze quicksilver, "and pray, what—what may you have given for them?" "Nothing—nothing at all," said Miss Gauntwolf, with forced vivacity. "Yes, you did," said Clive; "yes, you did, poor thing! and bought 'em in the dearest market."

Clive was then making her way to the green-room, as Mr. Gauntwolf, dressed for the Fourth Bravo in the comedy, came up. He was a tall, big-boned man, with a coarse, thin, rugged face, high cheek-bones, and a voice like the edge of a saw. With this, he assumed a sort of pompous gentility, as gilding to the base material. Seeing Mrs. Clive talking to his daughter, he was approaching Kitty, with a mouth set for a compliment, and had uttered a word or two, though I knew not what, when Clive started back, as though from a pit-fall, and with a most tragic intensity of expression, cried, "beast!" She then passed a few steps on, and was met by her friend, the equerry, who again opened small talk, which I did not attend to. The truth is, my curiosity was quickened towards Gauntwolf, who was still near me. I saw him apply himself to his snuff-box—a very handsome gold article, with a picture of Venus painted in enamel on the top. He was snuffing away the indignity put upon him by Clive, as Moody, also with open snuff-box, stood talking to another actor, near him.

Gauntwolf, unasked, put his fingers into Moody's box, at the same time advancing his own. Moody, looking the intruder full in the face, instantly emptied the box visited by Gauntwolf's fingers, on the floor. "What may that be on the lid?" asked another actor, standing by Gauntwolf. "Venus—Venus," was the answer. "'Twas given to me, I think I've said so, by his lordship." "Humph!" said the actor, glancing at Gauntwolf, and then at his daughter, "I thought it was Virginia, or the Roman father."

For a long time, I could not understand why it was that everybody shunned Gauntwolf, as though his breath carried a pestilence. At last, I learned the horrid story. That such

a man could look in the face of heaven—in the face of man! That he should walk upright! That a reptile in soul, he did not crawl like a snake to his grave upon the dust! That he should live, and bear the loathing of the world upon his shoulders, and yet try to smile, and make grim faces of content beneath it! The unutterable wretch had sold his daughter! He ate, drank, and clothed himself from the spotted fame of his trafficked child. Yes, Mr. Gauntwolf had shown himself equal to the devil in wickedness, and really carried with him the diploma of his iniquity in that gold box—given to him by his lordship!

There! Pah! Let us put some camphor in the ink, and go on.

Mrs. Clive remained talking to her friend as Garrick came from the stage. He was about to enter the green-room, when he met the young gentleman who played *Dugard*. "My good lad," said Garrick, "you are dull, plaguy dull in this; flat, very flat." "What would you have me do, sir? Indeed, I should be happy to be instructed," said the meek *Dugard*. "Do!" cried Garrick; "why you must feel more spirit—you must work yourself into the passion that—zounds, my lad! this is what you must do—you must put more Champagne—yes, that's it—you must put more Champagne into it." "Sir," replied the actor, with a literalness of apprehension sometimes found behind the scenes—"sir, I should be very happy, but it's impossible." "Impossible!" cried David, looking with his wonderful eye, "impossible to put more Champagne into it?" "Yes, sir," said the stolid *Dugard*, "with my salary, how can I afford it?" "Foregad!" cried David, smothering a laugh, "I had forgotten that. No: I see; small beer is the best we can hope from you."

At this moment Fanny Davis, dressed for the Second Lady, was laid hands upon by Mrs. Clive: "Come to my room, child," said Kitty, and—the dressing-room is a sanctuary, of which I speak no further; nevertheless, I may say this much, Fanny wore, for that night, Mrs. Clive's stage-jewels, and what passed between the two convinced me that Kitty had been as good as her word, and had called upon poor Davis and his all but shoeless child, as, from the boddice, I learned she had promised.

The play went on, and I was in the highest spirits. "Kitty," said Mrs. Abington, coming off the stage into the green-room, "there's that viper, Kelly, in the pit."

"Poor wretch! come for the benefit of his venom, I suppose;" whereupon further conversation ensued; from which I gathered that the said Hugh Kelly was one of those insects

of the ink-horn that make their dirty meals of public and private slander. Of him, however, I have more to say in another chapter.

"Confound it, Kitty," cried Garrick, in the course of the night, "why didn't you catch my eye in the last scene?"

"I couldn't," said Clive, with a face of delicious impudence, "it so burnt me up I couldn't look at it."

"Burnt you up!" exclaimed Garrick, half laughing, half vexed.

"Quite true," cried the indomitable Kitty; "how poor Mrs. Garrick has endured it, I can't tell: by this time I wonder the poor soul isn't cinders."

Still the play went on. An actor—I forget his name—who played *Gibbet*, again and again lamented to Mrs. Clive his hard destiny. He was the only man who could play *Mirabel;* but in that theatre, he was crushed, ruined, annihilated!

The green-room was empty. Mrs. Clive sat alone, unseen, behind the door. *Gibbet*, the ill-used actor, entered. He thought himself solitary with his wrongs. He stalked up and down the room, swelling and swelling—and then muttering and muttering his injuries. At length, he paused before the pier-glass; and, gazing intently at himself, he clenched his fist, and shaking it vehemently at the reflection of his face, growled with bursting heart, "You—you—you are a—a—fettered—lion!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" screamed Kitty Clive; and the fettered lion, more than amazed, rushed from the green-room.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

I AM LEFT IN CLIVE'S DRESSING-ROOM. A COLLOQUY WITH A HARE'S FOOT.

FAIN would I linger on the glories of the green-room; fain dwell upon the deliciousness of that fairy scene, in which men and women seemed exempt from all the cares, yea, from the bleak coldness of mere human life, making to themselves an existence of sweetest ease and happiest excitement. Malice, envy, and slander might be there; but, reader, say where they are not, and what an amaranthine bank that will be—what a half-way resting-place to heaven for human weariness! For my part, I was so

happy smelling and plucking the roses about me that I never thought of the slugs and creeping things that might be at their roots. And then I had seen so much of high life—which I suppose means life nearest heaven—that I had become tolerant of the failings of those living in the lower stories and cellars of the world's Babel; poor things, in dimness dwelling! denied the elevating influence of the starry host, which rains down wise humility on the topmost tenants.

An actor is a creature of conceit. Such is the reproof flung upon poor buskin. How, indeed, is it possible that he should escape the sweet malady? You take a man of average clay; you breathe in him a divine *afflatus;* you fill him with the words of a poet, a wit, a humourist; he is, even when he knows it not, raised, sublimated by the foreign nature within him. Garrick enters as *Macbeth*. What a storm of shouts—what odoriferous breath in "bravos" seething and melting the actor's heart! Is it possible that this man, so fondled, so shouted to, so dandled by the world, can at bed-time take off the *whole* of *Macbeth* with his stockings? He is always something more than David Garrick, householder in the Adelphi. He continually carries about him pieces of greatness not his own; his moral self is encased in a harlequin's jacket—the patches from Parnassus. The being of the actor is multiplied; it is cast, for a time, in a hundred different moulds; hence, what a puzzle and a difficulty for David to pick David, and nothing more than David, from the many runnings! And, then, an actor by his position takes his draughts of glory so hot and so spiced—(see, there are hundreds of hands holding to him smoking goblets!)—that he must, much of his time, live in a sweet intoxication which, forsooth, hard-thinking people call conceit. To other folks, reputation comes with a more gentle, more divine approach. You, sir, have carved a Venus, whose marble mouth would smile paralysis from Nestor; you have painted a picture and, with Promethean trick, have fixed a fire from heaven on the canvas; you have penned a book, and made tens of thousands of brains musical with divinest humanity—kings have no such music from cymbals, sackbut, and psaltery,—and to each of you reputation comes silently, like a fairy, through your study key-hole; you quaff renown refined, cold-drawn; cold as castor-oil; and, sir, if you be a true philosopher, you will swallow it as a thing no less medicinal. Let me, however, get back to my story.

The play was over, and for the night I was left in Mrs. Clive's dressing-room. I had, I felt it, achieved the most complete stage triumph; and from the fulness of a contented soul, sighed gently, *happily*. My future path seemed to me a path of satin and

spangles; and in the completeness of my success, all the sordidness and squalor of my past life faded into a dream; nothing to me seemed real but the glory of the present. Again I fetched a deeper and a deeper sigh.

"What's all these airs about?" cried a coarse voice, with something of a rustic twang. I started, but in a moment discovered that the speaker was a hare's-foot, whose duty it was to touch the honest cheeks of Kitty Clive with stage-rouge. "I suppose you think yourself somebody?" said the hare's-foot. "Pretty conceit, indeed!"

As I felt myself no match for the speaker, I meekly replied that I had no intention of offending anybody by unseemly affectation; but that I hoped some indulgence might be granted me as a young beginner; the more especially, after the exciting events of the night. It was impossible, I humbly submitted, to receive so much applause, and not be a little moved.

"It's like the whole tribe of ye," cried the hare's-foot with a sneering laugh. "Applause to you! Where would the applause have been but for me? Why, Kitty Clive would have looked a ghost, a spectre, a thing out of a shroud, but for my red! 'Twas I who gave something like youthful blood to her face and sparkle to her eye; and so have I helped her, year after year. Whilst you—what are you at the best but a supernumerary flourish; a thing that gives neither fire, nor expression, nor any other quality? But then, I own it, you are seen; you are a thing waving in the eyes of the world; and though, in my opinion, not worth a groat, you are gaped at and bepraised; whilst I, who give good gifts in secret, I am unthought of or despised."

Spite of my vanity, my conscience told me there was some truth in this. Hence, addressing the hare's-foot in the mildest manner, I begged to know if it had been long in the profession?

"I have painted everything," replied the hare's foot, "from *Juliets* down to the old women. Ha! no doubt you have sighed for the freedom of your African wilderness; you have yearned"——

"Yes," I answered hastily, "but never less than now. This life appears to me delicious. Indeed, I know no condition so blissful."

"Poor wretch!" cried the hare's-foot with a contemptuous groan. "Shall I ever forget the sweetness of my liberty? The fresh perfumed dew that bathed my infant paws? My adult gambols by moonlight? The sweet spring-grass and beds of thyme, and sweeter felony committed upon early peas in kitchen-garden? Nights of my youth! Fragrant and nimble was the

air around me, and freshness was in all my steps! Then was I guileless even to simplicity. I was slain, and from that hour I have been made an instrument of deception. Oh, the false paintings I have done! Oh, the cracked and faded human canvas I have daubed and daubed, and passed upon men for heaven's painting!"

There was an earnestness in these words that interested me. "How were you killed," I asked; "according to act of parliament, or"——

"No," cried the hare's-foot with much satisfaction, "I was not coursed, and worried, and torn to pieces according to the statute. No; I thank my stars, I was humanely poached. There might have been, in my case, more honour in dying by the laws of my country; but as far as I can conceive of the matter, snaring must be much less painful. Nevertheless," said the hare's-foot with a sudden touch of melancholy, "all my career has been mean and miserable. Would you think it? I was even cooked without gravy, and dished without currant jelly."

An exclamation of sympathy escaped me.

"You have heard," continued the hare's-foot, "that I was poached? I believe I owed my death to an unsophisticated love of the English drama. Yes; Hodge Peastraw, lacking the price of admission to the barn of Biggleton, elevated for a time into a theatrical temple, took me as a mysterious present to Bellowly, the manager. Mr. Bellowly vaunted an everlasting devotion to the laws of his country; nevertheless, Mrs. Bellowly had, at the time, a strange mysterious yearning for hare, and the manager sacrificed the feelings of the patriot to the tenderness of the husband. Hodge gave me—poor poached and slaughtered *me!*—to Bellowly; and Bellowly, who was that night to play *Othello*, gave Hodge an order for the show. Hence," added the hare's-foot with a slight laugh, "in the bargain that bartered me, there was murder on both sides."

"So your flesh," said I, "became a dinner to the manager's family, and Peastraw was never suspected?"

"Suspected!" cried the hare's-foot. "Mr. Bellowly took care of that, at the same time doing what was needful for his own dignity. He dropped a large blot of red sealing-wax upon my forehead, then writing an address to 'Achmet Bellowly, Esq., with the Lady of the Manor's admiring compliments,' tied the document to my hind-legs, and caused me to be delivered to him, during rehearsal, in the bosom of his whole company. Nevertheless, I was served up, I may say it, in undress; for the manager could not in private life rise to currant-jelly. I was eaten," said the hare's-foot with a sigh, "I was eaten without the honours."

"And your feet?" I asked.

"My fellow fore-paw was at once consigned to paint the heavy old men, and general utility. Fortune alone can tell what has become of it; but if there be anything in what the players call sympathy, I think it has sunk to the shows, for every year I feel strange low yearnings towards Bartlemy Fair."

"And yourself?" I asked. "What was your career, for you have strangely interested me?"

"You are very kind," answered the foot, in a slightly satirical tone. "I became the property of Mr. Bellowly's little Belvidera. Poor little thing! She was killed for a genius."

"Pray explain," said I.

"You must know," said the hare's-foot, "that it has been ordered by nature—whether wisely or not I will not answer—that every manager who is a father, has a genius: that is, he possesses a wonderful child, who has been privately suckled by the Tragic Muse, and taught the witching ways of comedy by Thalia. Poor Belvidera was this doomed wonder. Hence, I was set aside to rouge her little baby cheeks; to paint out the fresh hue of childhood—to overlay it with midnight red. Poor waxen puppet! She raved according to rote; she laughed a parrot laugh, she ogled, she simpered; she deformed the frank face of babyhood with the taught tricks of the woman; and grown fools applauded, and wondered, and cried a miracle! The marvel went on; and at length, Mr. Bellowly gave up, as he declared, a very flourishing circuit of barns—for no man more beautifully combined agriculture with the drama—to devote himself wholly to the interest of his darling Belvidera. And the daily wardrobe of Mr. Bellowly increased in lustre; and watch-and-chain, and rings, and other ornaments, which even philosophers, whilst they despise them, wear out of respect to the world, became the property of the devoted father; who, that no spot of the world might be denied the benefit of Belvidera's genius, would condescendingly exhibit it even in way-side inns, at taverns, clubs, in all places, and before all societies. And the poor child was coaxed, and petted, and hot-suppered into a belief of its own greatness, and into the reality of a slow and mortal sickness. I felt its cheek, now hot and clammy, as night after night I was made to lay on more and more paint, and I was assured that the creature was laughing, and dancing, and mumming, every night nearer and nearer to its little grave. And still Mr. Bellowly would, in his blindness, expand his paternal chest, and play with his watch-chain, and pass his ring-encumbered hand athwart his chin, when the meanest and most stolid biped fraction of the world would speak of that 'sweet little dear, his daughter;' to the which praise

the manager would merely reply, 'he knew not how it was that Heaven had blessed him, of all men, in that manner; but he was a happy father.'

"Time went on," continued the hare's-foot, "and Belvidera grew worse. The cough—that herald of the church-bell—seized her: nevertheless Mr. Bellowly declared 'twas nothing—merely symptomatic of the measles; and she couldn't have them in a better season. At this time the child played at a country theatre where Mrs. Clive acted. 'What think you, ma'am, of my darling Belvidera?' asked Bellowly. 'I think her,' said Kitty, in her sharp, quiet way—for she cuts as silently as a pickpocket's knife—'I think her the cleverest corpse I ever thought to see.' 'Heavens! ma'am,' cried Bellowly. 'I tell you, man,' said Kitty, outcrying him, 'you'll have that child's blood upon your hands as surely as those rings her blood has bought.'

"Oh, there was a long to-do! At last Mrs. Clive persuaded Bellowly—and, as I think, not without hard money—to take the child, for a time, from the stage. And she had the poor thing up to London, and sent doctors and physicians, and day after day would nurse her herself. But all would not do. The little waxen wonder wasted and wasted, and at length Bellowly, aghast, saw his infant miracle about to die.

"The little creature was meek, affectionate, intelligent. 'I shall die,' she said to Clive; 'I'm sure of it—and oh, it is so strange, I do not seem to fear it. I wish you would let me give you something—it is the only thing that ever was mine. Don't look at it till I'm dead, but pray take it.'

"Clive, with her heart gushing at her eyes, dumb and strangling with emotion, suffered the child to place the gift in her hand.

"The child died. Clive opened the paper, and found the gift to be a hare's foot—myself."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

I AM TAKEN FROM THE THEATRE.—A CRITIC'S INKSTAND.—DEATH OF MRS. GAPTOOTH.

I REMAINED only a few nights in Clive's dressing room, and was again given to the mistress of the wardrobe. I know not how it was—cannot divine what persuasion was used by Mr. Gauntwolf; but one morning I was consigned by the lady to his care, with strict injunctions of being speedily returned, lest Mr. Garrick should know it; and in a few minutes afterwards found myself in the Rose Tavern—a hostelry much used by actors and their familiar and distant admirers. Here, too, was the small hireling critic, who sugared his ink or added gall to it according to the condescension, flattery, and liquor of the parties to be written up or crushed for ever. Mr. Hugh Kelly was one of these biped insects of the press, and sold what he called fame or destruction to the trembling player. When I entered, I found him listening with an air of contemptuous patronage to the poor actor Davis, who was picking certain cuttings from newspapers—the solace of his life—out of an old leathern pocket-book, and endeavouring to read them to the London critic. These paragraphs were precious extracts from country journals—the *St. Kilda's Chronicle*, the *Penzance Flying Post*, the *Bullocksmithy Courier*—all of which, with twenty others, had declared, in good honest-faced type, that "that spirited actor Davis would inevitably get to the top of the tree;" and very benevolently advising "Mr. Garrick to look to his laurels." Sweet, passing sweet, to Davis were these promises! Though he was in the autumn of life—an autumn without fruit—with penury clinging to him like a garment, that flattering type would now and then cast a mild lustre about the past, and he would feel he had not lived in vain. He *had* been praised, and that was something.

"Gauntwolf, how d'ye do?" cried Kelly, turning abruptly from Davis. "Your girl played in *The Inconstant* divinely: looked lovely, too—and so I have said—and in pretty strong terms, I believe. Stop till I've written Mother Clive down, and then"—

"My dear sir," cried Gauntwolf, seizing Kelly's hand, and smiling hideously, "you make me, indeed, a happy father. As for other critics, Mr. Kelly, I value them, say what they will, as so many gnats. But you, sir! what you say should be written in

letters of gold!" Now, as Mr. Kelly was very often fee'd for what he wrote, many of his words may really be said to have been registered in that precious material.

"Yes, yes, I speak out—I give 'em plain English. I'm just finishing here another bunch of nettles for Mother Clive. I'll blister her!" cried the critic, with a look of manly triumph.

"'Pon my word, now," said Gauntwolf, with the compassionate air of a hangman, "you'll kill that poor woman—you will, indeed. I know she hasn't slept since your last attack."

"She shall never sleep again, sir; never. I have said it;" and the magnanimous Kelly smote the table with his fist. "Oh, what you've brought it at last, have ye?" said the critic to the waiter, who appeared with a large replenished inkstand. "Now, remember, sir, that I always have plenty of ink—a sea of it. When a man's thoughts are pouring from him, to be diving and diving for a drop of ink—'tis damnable."

"How you ever get your thoughts down," said the courteous Gauntwolf, "I can't think: they do seem to come upon you in such a flood. Waiter, a glass of brandy. May I be allowed the honour, Mr. Kelly?"

"Thank ye," responded the critic, "not at present. A *little* too early," and he addressed himself to his declared task—that of growing nettles upon paper for the doomed Mrs. Clive. In a few minutes Moody of Drury Lane entered. Kelly looked up; then immediately fixed his eyes upon the paper, Mr. Moody, possibly from a certain roughness of manner that belonged to him, not being among the stage favourites of the critic. Moody bowing recognition to several in the room, walked up to Kelly, and laying his hand upon the critic's shoulder, said, "one word, yes or no." Suddenly Mr. Kelly looked serious. Moody, in the most leisurely manner, took a newspaper from his pocket, and pointing to a paragraph, asked, "Is this your work?"

"I never eat my words," cried Kelly, rising, and assuming a big look; "they are mine."

"A foul, low, personal calumny on Mrs. Clive. Now, Mr. Kelly," and Moody grasped a cane with a significance that attracted Mr. Kelly's eye, "you deny this private slander, or"—

"I beg leave to repeat," cried the critic, beginning to tremble, and his eye still playing about the stick,—"I beg leave to say that I cannot eat my words."

"Very well," answered Moody; "the stars forbid that I should force a gentleman against his taste! But I tell you this, Mr. Kelly," and the actor raised his voice and his stick too,—"if you won't eat your words, you shall drink what your words are written in—before this good company, too—drink it to the health and long

life of Mrs. Clive, or there isn't a bone in your skin that sha'n't want a separate surgeon."

"What—what, sir—what do you mean?" stammered Kelly.

"Come, I'll be your cup-bearer, for once," said Moody, presenting the brimming inkstand to Kelly; "you shall empty this—it can't hurt you—for, though it may be poison to the peace of innocent women, you live upon it. Drink!" roared Moody; and striking his cane violently upon the ground, he at the same time forced the inkstand between the fingers of the slanderer.

Mr. Hugh Kelly, who dealt out life and death from his goose-quill—he who could crush any man with the thunder-stroke of his pen—looked appealingly about the room. Many familiar faces were there; but in no one of them did he see the least promise of assistance. On the contrary, there were not a few which indicated a mingled gratification and curiosity. And then the horrible Moody stood and shook his cane. "Drink!" again roared the actor.

"Mr. Moody," said Kelly, "you have injured me by a vile aspersion. You have been pleased to say that I live upon venomous ink. Now, sir, to show to the world, and to confound you with the truth, I will prove that there is no poison in my ink—prove it for my own satisfaction, mind you—by immediately drinking it." Saying this, and shutting his eyes, Kelly emptied the inkstand, filled so lately, by his express order, to the brim. Some of the company laughed, and others cried "bravo!" at the feat. "There," said Kelly, pale in the face and shuddering—"no man, I think, would drink poison in that way."

Moody glanced at the critic with the deepest contempt, and then burst into laughter. "Here," he said to the waiter, at the same time throwing a crown upon the table, "let Mr. Kelly have some brandy to wash his mouth with; and I hope, after this, he'll keep it the cleaner for the future." Moody then quitted the room; and Mr. Gauntwolf, possibly not feeling himself in a condition to sympathise with the ink-stained critic, caught me up and hastened to his lodgings. I soon discovered the purpose for which I had been borrowed; Mr. and Mrs. Gauntwolf had been invited by their dear girl to a "solemn supper," at which "his lordship" had graciously promised to attend. Mr. Gauntwolf, wishing to do all honour to the ceremony, had borrowed me, among other finery, from the theatre for the purpose; and in due season I was taken to the festival.

The party was small, but very hilarious. What, however, was my astonishment to find Mrs. Gaptooth of the company! She evidently felt the honour conferred upon her, for her manners were wonderfully precise and reserved: nor do I think that the

Gauntwolfs had a full knowledge of the character of the old gentlewoman distinguished by his lordship's friendship. The party, I say, was very merry. Mr. Gauntwolf kissed his dear child again and again; and as often begged his lordship to take snuff with him, "out of *that* box, which he should treasure to the last moment of his life." As the wine circulated, Mrs. Gaptooth became thawed, and laughed and talked in such a manner, that more than once Mrs. Gauntwolf, in the startled purity of her soul, wondered "who that woman could be?" When, however, the old woman talked of Fanny Davis, extolling her beauty to the skies, at the same time casting strange looks towards his lordship, Mrs. Gauntwolf was convinced that the creature "was no friend to her dear child!"

And the revelry went on. At length twelve o'clock warned the party of bed time. By this hour Mrs. Gaptooth felt her heart ripened to mellowness with generous wine; and Mrs. Gauntwolf, not wholly dead to its benevolent influence, thought more charitably of the "merry old lady." A coach was at the door—the Gauntwolfs could set Mrs. Gaptooth down—and the party rose for their homes. Mrs. Gaptooth quitted the room for an inner apartment, when—on Bacchus be the mortal blame!—taking the wrong turning, she fell down stairs. A piercing shriek ran through the house; and few, indeed, were the moments, and the wretched, sinful, dying old woman—for death, indeed, was looking awfully from her eyes—was brought up-stairs and laid upon a couch.

"A doctor—a doctor!"—cried Gauntwolf.

"A parson," groaned the woman, with terrible energy; "I am dying—I feel it here—I know it. Dying! That such a wretch as I should ever die! Send for Mr. Lintley—send for his friend the parson; be sure, the parson." She then with difficulty gave the apothecary's address, and a messenger was hastily despatched to him.

In a brief time, Lintley came, accompanied by Inglewood. At once he perceived there was no hope; the fall had produced a mortal injury of the spine.

"I did not want your assistance but forgiveness," said the woman, "and your's too, sir. God bless you, pray for me," she cried to Inglewood. "You don't know how I worked to destroy that poor child! There were twenty witnesses ready at my hire—but Curlwell would not be the villain to the last—to swear away poor Patty's life—Forgive me—beg of her to forgive me!" And with these words the miserable creature died.

CHAPTER XL.

I REMAIN IN THE FAMILY OF THE GAUNTWOLFS.—A LETTER AND A CHEQUE.

It may be that the sudden tragedy witnessed by Mr. Gauntwolf made him forgetful of his promise to return me to the mistress of the wardrobe; it may be that Mrs. Gauntwolf, approving my fitness to her beauty, refused to deliver me up. However it was, I remained some twelve months in the family, and in that time saw the gradual decline of all its glory. Week after week Miss Gauntwolf became more tetchy, pert, and violent.

"My darling lamb—my sweet one—my rose-bud," for with such tender and caressing words was Gauntwolf wont to address his bartered child, "my pearl of light, what ails you?"

"La, father! how can you be such a fool?" cried the dutiful Almeria. "What ails me, indeed!"

"You ought to be as happy as the days are long," exclaimed the father. "And yet for this last week, Almeria, you've been sobbing and pouting like any pauper. For shame! With your comforts about you, too! It's flying in the face of Providence."

"Comforts, indeed! And his lordship going to be married!" cried the girl; and her eyes flashed, and she bit her lips.

Mr. Gauntwolf took his gold snuff-box, the lustrous gift of his lordship, from his pocket, and squeezing together a pinch of snuff with quiet energy 'twixt finger and thumb, and then jerking it up either nostril, said, "Impossible."

"It can't be, Almeria," cried Mrs. Gauntwolf. "Going to be married! He couldn't do it."

"His lordship's too much of a gentleman," said Gauntwolf; and his eye slumbered complacently on the gold snuff-box.

"You're both fools together!" exclaimed the young vixen; "blind fools, not to see it."

"Almeria," said Gauntwolf, acting the wounded father, "is this language to me—to your darling mother? Is this our reward?—this the payment for our anxious days, our sleepless nights; this the return for all our tenderness? You, Almeria, have been our idol; the sole object of our every thought; to make your fortune, to see you well in the world, has been our only purpose on this earth, before we went down hand-in-hand into the quiet grave. A thankless child, as King Lear very

properly observes, is sharper than a serpent's tooth; I feel it, Almeria—I feel it;" and Mr. Gauntwolf, with a tear glistening in his eye, again took from his lordship's box a consolatory pinch. Mrs. Gauntwolf drew a long sigh, and, with a sympathetic look at her husband, shook her head.

"It's all very fine talk about serpents' teeth," said Miss Gauntwolf; "but I tell you his lordship's going to be married; and just, too, as I was beginning to love him." Here the young lady began to whimper very piteously.

"Now, Almeria, how will you go on so?" cried Mrs. Gauntwolf; "crying for nothing, and making your nose as red as anything? It's only your fond fears; just like your jealousy about Fanny Davis; and what did that end in? His lordship was going to run away with her; at least, so you would have it; and now, the poor little wretch is really married to one of the fiddlers."

"Poor little thing! Yes, really married," said Gauntwolf, again taking snuff. "Ha! she deserved a better fate. But, then, she had no fond father to watch her interests; nobody to put her on in life; for Davis knows nothing of society—poor creature! quite a fool. Whilst you, Almeria—you, who are envied and"——

"What's the use of being envied for a little time, if it's not going to last?" inquired Almeria. "I know his lordship's altered—I'm sure of it. Have I had a letter from him this whole week? He's getting colder and colder, and will bring me to an early grave."

"Colder! You're a fond, foolish girl," said Mr. Gauntwolf. "Didn't I tell you that I met his lordship yesterday; and I'm sure he squeezed my hand—no brother could have been kinder."

All these paternal assurances failed to comfort Almeria; for she flung herself from the room, muttering something about old fools, and that nobody was so blind as they who wouldn't see.

Miss Gauntwolf being fairly gone, her mother, with an anxious look, observed that after all it was strange, very strange, that his lordship had not called—not so much as written. "Should anything like a marriage happen, that poor girl would break her heart. My dear Abimelech," said Mrs. Gauntwolf to her husband, "hadn't you better sound his lordship?"

"There can be no harm in that," said Gauntwolf, "and now I think of it, I've an excellent way to probe his affections. We want a hundred pounds, Eliza?"

"Dreadfully," answered Mrs. Gauntwolf, with great emphasis.

"I'll ask his lordship to lend me the sum," said Gauntwolf. "If he should refuse, why we shall know what to think of him

Should his lordship mean falsehood to Almeria, he shall find that she has still a father." Concluding this sentence, Mr. Gauntwolf snatched his snuff-box from his pocket, and, with a determined look, shaking his head very significantly, he took a mighty pinch.

"You've hit upon the very plan, Abimelech," said Mrs. Gauntwolf; "and as we can't have the money too soon, and besides, can't know too early what his lordship means towards our dear girl, suppose, like a good creature, you go at once?"

Mr. Gauntwolf, in the pursuit of money, was a man of decision. The fifth minute from this discourse saw him on his way to his lordship's mansion. In less than an hour he had returned to his happy, peaceful hearth, with new gleesomeness in his eyes; new importance in his manner. His whole anatomy seemed seething in content.

"You've got the money, Abimelech?" cried Mrs. Gauntwolf, interpreting with feminine quickness her husband's happy looks.

"To be sure. As I have said, received me like a brother. Ha! this it is to deal with real noblemen."

"And you've really got the money?" again asked Mrs. Gauntwolf. "And Almeria—what did his lordship say about our dear girl?"

"Spoke like a gentleman and a man of honour. Said her happiness was the nearest to his heart; called her a sweet girl—a good girl; and said both of us ought to think such a child a treasure. When he said that, I at once asked him for the hundred pounds. Ha! Eliza, what a fool I was," said Gauntwolf, and a shadow fell upon his face. "His lordship was so affable, I might have made it two."

"It *is* a pity," cried the wife. "But where is the money?"

"His lordship will send it—in half-an-hour, he said." A knock at the door attested his lordship's punctuality. A livery servant brought a letter—no answer was required—directed to Mr. Gauntwolf. "Here it is, Eliza; his own gracious hand—his own beautiful seal. Two unicorns, and the Latin *Omnia virtute.* You don't know what that means, Eliza; it means,"—Gauntwolf had somewhat improved its meaning from his lordship—"it means 'Everybody in the world is done by virtue.'"

"A beautiful sentiment," cried Mrs. Gauntwolf; "but let's see the money."

"Why, you don't suspect it isn't here? No, no; had it been a thousand pounds, his lordship had not refused it. Here it is," cried Gauntwolf, taking a cheque, delicately as it had been a butterfly, from the letter; "here it it is: '*Pay to Almeria Gauntwolf or bearer the sum of*'—why, no, it isn't—it can't be,"

exclaimed Gauntwolf, with more than player's energy: 'and yet it is—'*the sum of Two Hundred Pounds.*' Two hundred pounds!"

"It can't be," cried Mrs. Gauntwolf, with an hysteric laugh, and snatching the cheque: "it's impossible, and—'*Two hundred pounds!*'"

"What a man he is to read hearts! His lordship knew I wanted two hundred," said Gauntwolf.

"'*Two hundred pounds,*'" read Mrs. Gauntwolf, "'*value received.*' Is that the way they always write cheques?" she asked. "Do they always put '*value received?*'"

"Not always," answered Gauntwolf; "but then his lordship's such a man of business."

"But isn't it strange, my love, that his lordship should have written the cheque in the name of Almeria?"

"Not at all; a delicate way of conferring a favour; so like a real nobleman!" cried Gauntwolf. "But here's his lordship's letter; this is to myself, listen. 'Lord —— presents his compliments to Mr. Gauntwolf, and forwards, for the use of his daughter, the inclosed cheque, as a—a—farewell gift.'"

"A what!" screamed Mrs. Gauntwolf.

Gauntwolf, flushed to the eyes, cleared his throat, and after an effort proceeded:—"'His lordship leaves England next week, a married man.'"

"The villain!" exclaimed Mrs. Gauntwolf.

"The heartless, mindless, soulless robber!" cried the actor, who snatched the cheque from the hand of his wife, and with a look of vengeance held it extended, a thumb and finger loathingly grasping either end. Thus for a moment stood Gauntwolf. He then exclaimed between his teeth, as though the genius of a better thought had lighted in his brain, "But no!"

"Everybody done by virtue!" cried Mrs. Gauntwolf, with a venomous sneer, as she glanced fierily at his lordship's motto.

"An insult—a cowardly insult—to a broken-hearted girl," said Gauntwolf.

"And after all," exclaimed his wife, "God knows! they mayn't pay the cheque."

Woman—bless her! a thousand and a thousand times softens the ruggedness of fortune; nevertheless, thought Gauntwolf, she has now and then a knack of making bad worse, by the force of ill-timed suspicion. At least, such was the infirmity of Mrs. Gauntwolf; who, by this doubt, this last surmised evil —almost unmanned her agitated helpmate.

"In the wide world," exclaimed Gauntwolf, unconsciously adopting the worst language of the playhouse, "there cannot be

so vile a wretch! Not pay the cheque! Perhaps, ordered not to pay it! To sport with the heart-strings of an innocent child! But his lordship—aye, and were he ten times a lord—shall find that his victim, his artless victim, has a father." Here Mr. Gauntwolf again applied for consolation to the gold snuff-box.

At this moment, Miss Gauntwolf, alarmed by the vehemence of her parent, entered the room. What could be the matter? Whereupon Mr. Gauntwolf, for the time suppressing the letter, assured Almeria that it was nothing; he was merely talking with her mother about his lordship's cheque. "And here," said Mr. Gauntwolf, "here it is; look. '*Pay to Almeria Gauntwolf or bearer the sum of two hundred pounds,*'"——

Almeria took the document from her father's hand, and almost unconsciously concluded the sentence—"*Value received.*"

CHAPTER XLI.

GAUNTWOLF FALLS SICK.—HIS GRIEF AND HIS GOLD SNUFF-BOX.

MR. GAUNTWOLF lost no time in hurrying to the banker's. It was all right; the cheque was paid; and the anxious father, somewhat relieved and soothed by the circumstance, returned to his home, as he expressed himself to his wife, "with a load off his heart." Leaving to the partner of his bosom the painful and delicate task—she could do it much better than he could—of communicating his lordship's treason to Almeria, Mr. Gauntwolf again sallied forth.

I will not dwell upon the misery of Almeria; if her grief was painful, it was happily very brief, for in less than a week, solaced and uplifted by the philosophy of her mother, she followed her advice, which was to "wipe his lordship clean from her heart, like a milk-score from a door-post." And then, there were the two hundred pounds which, for a time, gave a sweet oblivion to all care! Mrs. Gauntwolf blazed in new gowns; Mr. Gauntwolf became the wit and idol of a tavern set, merely by virtue of paying their score; whilst the thought of some new conquest that should prove to his lordship how very contemptible a person he was to her, imparted even a skittish vivacity to the deserted Almeria.

Sweet, however, as are two hundred pounds, they carry with them this alloy—they will not give delights and last. In some three months—for Mr. Gauntwolf had in the handsomest manner discharged a few debts which had become very pressing—scarcely a shilling of his lordship's farewell donation remained unspent. Another loss—severe, irreparable—fell upon the hapless Gauntwolf. I have before related that, as an actor, his deep, blatant voice, was his chief excellence. Nature had marked and fitted him up for at least a stage-ruffian. His lungs were his fortune. What, then, will be felt by the reader, doubtless much interested in the destinies of Gauntwolf, when he is informed that the actor—stricken by sudden cold, when jocundly emerging from a tavern—became dead hoarse? "Hush'd was Apollo's lute." For some time, the calamity was considered but as a passing evil: rum and butter, or twenty other specifics—which Gauntwolf had successfully tried as many times—would bring back the treasured music to the organ. Reader, that music was gone—extinct as a dead nightingale. Gauntwolf, who once spoke like a Philistine trumpet, had not voice enough wherewith to rouse a mouse. Even Mrs. Gauntwolf had to incline her ear to catch the reedy sounds of her afflicted mate. After a few weeks, Gauntwolf, being found mere lumber in the theatre, was discharged. His voice had kept him in his situation—he was so useful in the thieves and murderers; but that gone, his character in no way addressed itself to managerial sympathies. Besides, it so happened that when Gauntwolf was found to be vocally useless, he was discovered to be shamefully immoral: hence, his discharge—at least in the opinion of the management—threw a sort of lustre on the authority that banished him.

And now poverty, with every day a sterner, ghastlier look, became the inmate of the house of Gauntwolf. It was hardly to be hoped that his daughter, taught as she had been, would remain in so cold and dreary a mansion, and with her slender salary, bestow a passing comfort on such household misery. No; she left her parents and, in her own words, took care of herself. She was too young to be moped up; it would be time enough for her to know trouble when she grew older. She left her father in suffering and destitution; and he—poor wretch!—marvelled at her ingratitude, seeing, as he said, what he had done for her!

Daily meals still took away some article of dress—some little piece of plate; and now a brooch—and now a ring bought breakfast and dinner. With every sacrifice, Gauntwolf's temper became sourer and more violent. Then would he strive to rave and roar at his wife, but his voice sounded like wind through a

crevice, and his blasphemies were scarcely audible, though his features were often blackened and convulsed with rage. His wife would at times sit in most malicious tranquillity, eyeing her gasping mate with scorn and contumely. "Why don't you speak out?" she has said, in her most sneering moods, "why don't you speak out, and then I should hear you?" And then Gauntwolf, panting and foaming with passion, has shaken his fists in the woman's face, who has laughed the more provokingly. These were fits of passion. There were times when husband and wife exchanged sympathy and tenderness, mutually bemoaning their fortune—mutually lamenting their undutiful daughter. And then, with more than usual pathos, would Gauntwolf take snuff from the gold box, and cry—"And after all I have done for her!"

Throughout the domestic wreck Gauntwolf had clung to that gold box with the tenacity of dying vanity. Twenty times had his wife begged that she might carry that valuable to the pawnbroker; no, anything but that; he would want bread—he would perish first. Then, in maudlin voice he would cry he could not help it. Almeria had been an undutiful child; it was true—an unfeeling child; and yet that snuff-box seemed still to link her to his heart; yes, and he would lose his heart-strings ere he would part with it. And so, every day some household article, some piece of dress was pawned, Gauntwolf seeking consolation with snuff from the gold box—the gift of his lordship—the gold box with the beautiful Venus on the lid—the gold box that always brought back thoughts of his undutiful daughter. Hence, Gauntwolf was resolute: he would sit with hunger at his vitals—with desolation around him—but he would hold to the death the gold box!

Speedily sickness fell upon Gauntwolf. In a fortnight from the first attack, he lay in utter helplessness, with poverty, destitution at his bed-side. A little money was raised at the theatre; for Mrs. Clive, on hearing the wretched man's condition, headed the subscription list, and carried it round the green-room. This help somewhat smoothed the sick man's pillow; but the disease grew, and the money ebbed and ebbed, and again Gauntwolf was penniless.

"Now, my dear, my love—let me, do let me take that box," cried the wife, with her ear close to the sick man's lips.

"I won't—I can't—I'll suffer anything first," said Gauntwolf, in a gasping whisper.

"It's not like selling it; we can get it again, Abimelech; to be sure we can, when you are well, and your voice comes back; and doesn't the doctor say that this very sickness may be the

means of bringing it back again? Do let me take the box," and the wife was sliding her hand under the pillow.

"Leave it alone!" cried Gauntwolf; and with sudden might he rose in the bed, and looked rage and defiance at his wife. "It's like tearing my life away to part with it. Never—never—while I live, never! My poor child—my naughty child,—yet, it's all I have to remember her." In this manner did the wretched man, dupe to himself, confound the recollection of his daughter with the golden payment of the infamy he, her father, had brought upon her.

Gauntwolf became worse—delirious: his wants increased—there was neither food nor firing in the house; and whilst he slept, his wife drew from beneath his pillow the contested snuff-box, which the pawnbroker changed into money. Ten guineas did Mrs. Gauntwolf carry from the money-lender; ten guineas, which, she declared to her landlady, seemed as if dropt from heaven! Ere she returned home she had taken the precaution of buying a bright brass box which—filled with snuff—she placed beneath Gauntwolf's pillow. He was too ill—too light-headed, she said, to know the difference, and as he got well, she could break the matter to him. She felt—as she avowed to her landlady—that it was a dreadful sacrifice for him; he had such pride, such manly pride; and then he so loved that box for the sake of his daughter. Nevertheless, could she as a wife stand there and see him die for medicine, with that gold snuff-box under his pillow? It could have been nothing but Providence that made them keep that gold box for such a time! What should they have done without that gold box?

Time brought healing on its wings; Gauntwolf's fever subsided, but left him worn, spent, emaciated. For a week he had taken no snuff. At length, he whispered—looking with a quickened look at his wife—"My box—where is my box?"

"Under your pillow—you'll find a box, love—yes, under your pillow," said the wife coaxingly.

The sick man searched, and whilst his wife shrunk from the bed-side he drew forth the brass counterfeit. In a moment he saw the truth; in a moment seemed to know and acknowledge the necessity that had made the change. Hence, with a tear trickling down his nose, he resignedly tapped the lid, lifted it, took a pinch of snuff, and said, turning the box in his hand, "Brass! God bless me! this is indeed a trial." Mrs. Gauntwolf, affected by the resignation of, as she called him, her suffering martyr, rushed from the room, and in glowing words narrated the scene to her landlady. "When the dear soul saw it was brass, bless him, he took it like an angel." Whereupon the

landlady assured Mrs. Gauntwolf that such obedience to the will of the Lord would be sure to meet with blessings. For herself she had no doubt of it, Mr. Gauntwolf would get his beautiful, manly voice once more ; and she should see him in *Richard*, go to murder the young princes once again !

Vain human hopes—fond, empty aspirations ! Gauntwolf recovered his health ; but his voice remained dead and buried in his throat. Strong he was, and could have done porter's work ; but, as he lamented, he had been born and bred a gentleman—for this, be it remembered, I have only Gauntwolf's unsupported word—and how could he labour like a common fellow ? How he lived from month to month,—Heaven, that has charge of the destitute, alone knew how. And then the frequent memento of his present wretchedness—that brass snuff-box ! Oh, it would wear his heart, the more especially if softened by a gratuitous glass of spirits or a mug of ale ! "That it should come to this ! " he would say, in melancholy musing, feeding his nose —"That it should come to this ! Brass ! Gracious Heaven—brass ! "

CHAPTER XLII.

I AM PAWNED, AND AGAIN SOLD TO SHADRACH JACOBS.—I BECOME THE PROPERTY OF AN UNDERTAKER.

TIME passed, and the fortunes of Gauntwolf still remained desperate. His voice returned not, and the intemperance which, at others' cost, he sometimes indulged in, brutalised his temper, and by degrees gave him the countenance of a savage. Then would he wreak his worst wishes on his daughter, who, as he declared, all forgetful of his tenderness, had deserted the best of fathers in his sorrow and destitution, and whilst she herself revelled in the luxuries of the world—for Almeria had been beguiled from the theatre, and lived a life of miserable, guilty splendour—suffered the kindest, most indulgent of parents to wither on a crust. Poor wretch ! and so he wasted, his gray hairs being to him as a crown of penal fire. (He died, as I afterwards learned, in misery, and his child indignantly refused to look upon her father's corpse.)

Piece by piece each article was pawned. How it was that I remained so long in the possession of Mrs. Gauntwolf, I will explain. Again and again, when making up a parcel for the

money-lender, did she take me between her fingers, ponder awhile, then lay me down again. "No," she has said to herself, "I'll live in hope; better times must come; and if they don't, why it sha'n't go till the last, I'm determined." She could not give up the fond, the flattering thought, that at some early day she should be called, as she expressed it, into the world again, and therefore hoarded me, even with superstitious care, that I might grace her reappearance on the stage of life. "Besides," she has sometimes added, "they'd lend me nothing on it after all." The time, however, came when our separation could no longer be put off. Hence I was one day taken to the pawnbroker. Yes; poor Mrs. Gauntwolf looked at me with moistened eyes; sighed very heavily; then carefully laying me in a piece of folded paper, carried me away to the money-lender, who, with the brevity of his trade, asked, "How much?"

"You must let me have a crown, indeed, you must," said Mrs. Gauntwolf, trying to smile through all her heaviness of heart.

The pawnbroker flung me contemptuously back, saying, "Eighteenpence."

"Now, really, I've been a good customer," said Mrs. Gauntwolf, "and I happen to want the exact crown. My dear sir"——

"Eighteenpence," repeated the pawnbroker.

"Now really"——

"Don't waste my time. Eighteenpence." The money-broker was inexorable.

"I must take it," said Mrs. Gauntwolf, with a sigh: the money was paid, and in the evening I was deposited in the pawnbroker's store-room, where I remained undisturbed for upwards of a twelvemonth. Then I was sold with other unredeemed goods, and once more passed into the hands of Shadrach Jacobs, my old master, of the Minories; that thrifty Hebrew always attending the sale of pawnbrokers' effects, to buy thereat his profitable penn'orths. How my heart sank within me as the old Jew turned me over and over! What scenes had I mingled in since he last took me between his fingers! And had I been dressed, prepared for a Prince of Wales, only at length to be returned to the miserly Jew, my first London purchaser? Alas! I knew not then what further misery awaited me.

When Shadrach Jacobs carried me to his den in the Minories, I no longer found there the plump and languishing Miriam. "She'll die in a ditch vid de Christian dog she's married—she *vill, she* vill," cried Shadrach to a friend and fellow-tradesman,

Moses Moss, who called upon him very shortly after my arrival at the Jew's house. "Ha, Moses, my tear friend, it's unknown what she robbed me on; if I hadn't been her father, I'd a hanged her; but I couldn't do it—I couldn't do it." And so the old man lived alone, hoarding, hoarding; hunting bargains hour by hour —accumulating wealth for no end. His daughter had forgotten the fate of her fathers, and married a Christian butcher. Old Shadrach was a childless, miserable, wealthy man. Every day he became more and more enfeebled, and all his money could not buy him one touch of sympathy in his downward path; and so, unregarded, he travelled with disease upon him to the grave. In three months after he became my purchaser, Shadrach died. Who inherited his wealth I know not. What I know is this; his stock and household goods were sold, and I was bought by Shadrach's late friend, Moses Moss, who had me cleaned, and shortly afterwards sold me to a furnishing undertaker. In brief time I was promoted to the plume, and solemnly borne on a lid before the hearse.

I will not dwell upon my experience in this my new and most melancholy condition. Not that I should need matter wherewith to chequer scenes of funereal woe. The lively and humorous discourse of those chamberlains of death, the undertaker's men, who—the funeral over—make so very merry at the public-house, and are so extremely jocose on the top of the hearse, would afford me very pleasant and mirthful memories. All these, however, I shall pass, dwelling only upon one incident of my funereal life.

Has the reader forgotten Jessy—the miserable, blighted, yet warm-hearted girl, who in her passion of remorse besought the prayers and forgiveness of Patty Butler? She died in peace and penitence, though it is not of her funeral I have now to speak.

One Sunday I had been upon duty, carried before the hearse, at the funeral of a man, a bachelor, who died an early death. He was buried in a suburban church-yard, where at least the grass could grow about the graves, and was not blighted, stifled by London soot. He was not laid in a London charnel-house, where London life in all its noise and activity roars and bustles around the sanctuary of death. No; he was buried in a quiet, sequestered spot; and the funeral over, the undertakers hurried with the hearse to the door of the Silver Lion, where they "undressed" the vehicle of all its mournful appointments. An elderly woman, in decent black, had followed the procession from the house to the grave-yard. It was a sultry day, and her walk had been a long one: the woman paused at the door of the inn,

and asked for a glass of ale. She then seated herself on a bench at the door, and in a few minutes was in conversation with the mistress of the inn, who, having brought the ale, still lingered gossiping in the sunshine; the while the undertaker's men drew me with my companions from the hearse, and deposited us in a bag.

"You've had a long walk, eh, mistress?" said she of the Silver Lion.

"Yes, ma'am, long enough," said the woman. "But had the way been twice as long, I must have come."

"Ha! you knew the poor man that's buried?"

"I can hardly say I knew him, and yet there was something so sweet in his manner—something so sorrowful in his story, that, though I never spoke twenty words to him, made me quite love him. Ha, ma'am," cried the woman, "folks may laugh and jeer as they will, but men do die of broken hearts, be sure of it."

"And did he die so?" asked the landlady, immediately interested in the fate of the departed.

"Ay, indeed, he did. I'll tell you the story. You see, ma'am, I'm one of the pew-openers at the Magdalen—you've heard of the Magdalen, ma'am?"

"To be sure I have," answered the landlady, a little coldly, "and what of the Magdalen?"

"Well, ma'am, the poor young man that's buried had been to sea, far away in foreign parts, and came home with money for life. Before he went away he was plighted to a girl, and now he was come back, and was going down the next morning to his native place to see her. In the evening he came to our church. Shall I ever forget his healthy, happy face, when I showed him to a seat? Yet, when the service was over, he seemed troubled in his looks; there was a sort of cloud upon him. Well, ma'am, a month after that he came back; and then was his face as fixed and white as any stone."

"He had lost his sweetheart, I suppose?" said the landlady. "Married somebody else, no doubt?"

"Worse than that, ma'am. Some time after he had gone to sea, she became flighty and foolish, and the end of it was, she left her home and led a life of sin. Poor soul! she repented, if ever poor mistaken soul repented; but she was not to remain in this world. When she came to the Magdalen, she was fast gone into a consumption. Yet she would sing so beautifully! Oh, you could hear her voice so sweet, and so pure above all the others! Well, ma'am, as it afterwards *turned out*, she sang, and for the last time at church, on the

very night that her sweetheart first came there. It was her voice—though he couldn't believe it hers—that had so troubled him. However, he went home, and learned all his misery—she who should have been his wife was a penitent sinner in the Magdalen."

"Dear heart!" cried the landlady.

"As I say, ma'am, he came back, but Jessy—for that was her name—was dead. So to speak, he had heard her dying voice; she never sang after that night."

"Poor soul!" said the landlady. "And did he come after that to the church?"

"Never missed a day, ma'am," said the pew-opener. "But every time looked paler and paler, and thinner and thinner. Poor soul! When the women sang the hymns I've seen the tears sometimes come into his eyes, as if he heard her voice again, and he would sigh so it would have melted a heart of stone to hear him."

"How very odd!" cried the landlady. "I never thought to hear such a thing of a man; with us, to be sure, broken hearts are common enough. But a man—well, I never!"

"Oh, anybody could see his was breaking. Last Sunday week only, he came to church; for many Sundays I never expected to see him again—but still, though weaker and weaker, he was there; and still he smiled so gently, so patiently, and to the last seemed so comforted with the singing! Ha, ma'am," cried the pew-opener, "if there ever was such a thing as a broken heart, there's one in his coffin."

And such was the end—the happy end—of Jessy, for she died in peace and in purity of spirit. Such the closing hour of him who should have been her husband. Her voice seemed to have left its dying echoes in the church, and still the wasting, broken-hearted man would smile as fancy listened to them.

CHAPTER XLIII.

I LEAVE THE UNDERTAKER, AND AM PROMOTED TO A MONKEY'S CAP.

HAPPILY, I was not fated to remain long in the service of the undertaker; although, indeed, my release from him was purchased at a considerable sacrifice. One day, the undertaker's men having possibly been more than usually impressed with the solemnity of their calling, required more than their usual quantity of alcohol to give a fillip to their cast-down spirits. In a word, they lingered so long at the public house, that one and all of them became, in the most intense meaning of the word, drunk. They brawled, scuffled, and fought; and in the confusion, a lighted candle falling on the bag in which myself and comrades were, after the ceremony of interment, ordinarily deposited, the flame in an instant singed me from top to toe. It was impossible that I could be taken back to my owner in my burnt condition, and therefore, in the most liberal spirit, peace being somewhat restored, I was given to the bar-maid,—who the next week presented me to a damsel, who for three nights became the tenant of the back attic of the Hare and Hounds, the while the fair was held in the village. This maiden was the columbine of the first booth; but I was even too much disfigured to appear in the front of a show, and was therefore given, I presume, as a sort of *gage d'amour*, to a Mr. Bunkle, the proprietor of a dromedary and a monkey. In a trice, I was placed as an ornament in the monkey's cap; and my wearer being perched upon the dromedary's back, I was enabled to consider out-door life from a very advantageous eminence. As the monkey twitched his cap on and off at the command of his master, and so rumpled me sadly, it is true I felt an occasional twinge at the indignity; that I, who had commenced life as one of the plumes of a Prince of Wales, should end in a monkey's bonnet, becoming the beggar of half-penny pieces! Such were now and then my thoughts, but I warded them off with a gay philosophy that said—"Pooh, pooh, let's jog on, and be merry."

However, my situation had this advantage. As I was carried to all parts of London, and travelled many portions of the country, I learned the history of several of my old acquaintances. It is true I learned it by snatches, but yet sufficiently well to piece out a history. Hence, one day while my master was

exhibiting his wonders—the dromedary and myself—at Tyburn Turnpike, I beheld among the crowd, leaning on the arm of a stalwart-looking tradesman, dear Mrs. Cramp, the card-maker's widow. But there was such happiness in her face—such heartiness in her laughter as my wearer, the monkey, approached and doffed his bonnet to her, that I was convinced her shattered heart had been newly cemented by a second marriage. Her face seemed shining in the serene light of a honeymoon. It is true, she stood upon the death-place of Abram Clickly—for, alas! the highwayman was really hanged,—nevertheless, it was plain she was not haunted by the remembrance of that untoward event. Yes—there was no doubt of the fact—she was married. The tone in which I heard her say, "Come, love, or Becky will scold us for spoiling dinner," rang with wedded bliss. And Becky—the faithful, sympathising Becky—still kept her place, and doubtless still guarded the secrets of her mistress.

It was on one of these pilgrimages, that my owner—as usual seeking the hospitality of a stable for my wearer and the bigger beast—put up at the Crown at ——. What was my astonishment, shall I say, too, my delight—to find that albeit the hostelry bore the name of Julius Curlwell, it was Curlwell's wife who ruled the house, and more especially ruled the individual master thereof? And who, think ye, reader, was Mrs. Curlwell? No other than the former Mrs. Pillow, housekeeper to the Earl of Blushrose. Every movement of her tongue seemed to blister the hapless Julius; he winced and trembled, yet answered not. When my master, with a bland politeness that really exalted his calling, asked Mr. Curlwell to grant the shelter of his stable at the lowest possible price, Curlwell replied not, but looked appealingly to his wife; whereupon, Mrs. Curlwell exclaimed, "Beasts! I'll have no more beasts than the law compels me to have in *my* place. Hav'n't I beast enough in you, you lazy animal?"—she exclaimed to Julius, who had not the courage to venture dissent. Sweet, most sweet to me, was it to know that Julius Curlwell, the plague and persecutor of Fanny Butler, was sentenced for life to the excoriating voice of a painted shrew—for her cheeks were red as ruddle—together with an occasional visitation from rolling-pin or candlestick. Hymen had terribly avenged the wrongs of the feather-dresser.

Repulsed from the Crown, the showman wandered to a village—the village of Mannasfield—some three miles off. Here we exhibited, evidently to the very great admiration of the rustic natives and to the especial delight of their children. It was plain that we had fame enough among them; but equally plain that we had no halfpence. My master had a touch of the philosopher

and the philanthropist in his composition; nevertheless, he could not, as he said, "keep his beasts for nothing," and was therefore about to leave Mannasfield with some disgust at the little tangible patronage he had received from its inhabitants, when an incident occurred that altogether mollified him, sending him in good humour to an opposite ale-house.

The dromedary was showing his paces, and the monkey in his most winning way holding his cap to the crowd that laughed loudly at his antic politeness, yet nevertheless dropt no copper to him,—when a lady stept from a cottage. The monkey—well educated beggar!—immediately approached her, and held forth his cap with most beseeching air. The lady—there seemed to me a sweet benignity in her eyes, though her face was stained and disfigured by disease—smiled, and then—I knew not how it was—I felt certain that I had seen her somewhere before, though where I could not well remember. Looking graciously, pityingly at the poor monkey, she dropt a shilling in his cap, and with a new smile passed on.

"Well, that's what I call a lady—a real lady down to the stockings," said my master.

"You may say a lady," chimed in the master of the ale-house, who was sunning himself in his door-way, and gratuitously enjoying the performances of the beasts. "You may say a lady."

"Lives hereabout, I suppose?" said my master.

"Up at the great house," said the landlord.

"Give us a mug of ale, and I'll drink her health, and wish there was more like her," cried my master, dropping himself on a bench, that he might at leisure enjoy his tipple.

"That's a angel, turned to a woman," said the tapster, bringing the ale;" "and more than that, she's a real Countess—mayhap you've heard of her, for she made a great noise once in London—she's the Countess Blushrose. She was the beauty of six counties once."

"I can't say much for her beauty," answered my master, "but a shilling *was* like a lady."

"Ha!" said the publican, "she was beautiful, I can tell you; but the droll thing is, when she was in the full blow of her beauty nobody could abear her. Her husband and she, like poker and tongs, was always on opposite sides. You see, she thought all the world was in her beautiful face, and nothing whatsomever out of it. Then, she'd as soon agone into a pig-stye with silk stockings on as walked into the cottage of a poor man; now, bless your heart! she's all the contrary."

"That's droll enough," said my master; "and how was it *brought about*?"

"You see, one night, when she was in all the glory of her beautiful face, over-dancing or something of that sort—she caught the—the—I don't know why they give sickness such hard names, unless it be to frighten it—the erisypuluss."

"Sipelas," said the landlord's wife in correction, the two eking out the proper word.

"That's it," said the landlord; "well, that it seems was enough; there was no more beauty—that was gone for life. When they first showed her a looking-glass, they say she doubled up her little white fist and smashed it into a thousand pieces. And then she wept and tore her hair, and all that. At last, she listened to reason. She give up London, and all its routs and balls; come down here—from the first moment went among the poor,—and now she nurses 'em and talks to 'em just as if they was like her own flesh and blood. Now, she never stirs that she doesn't walk out like in a very shower of blessings."

Such was the benignity—such the benevolence of the Countess Blushrose.

CHAPTER XLIV.

I AGAIN MEET WITH PATTY BUTLER.—HER MARRIAGE.—CONCLUSION.

My story now approaches the end. My master continued to travel from place to place, and at length one day arrived at Mantrap Park, the abode of the two Miss Peachicks—the lodgers of Flamingo—the visitors to Newgate—the simple, sympathising creatures who, touched by the early sorrows, the sweet patience of Patty Butler, had carried her away with them from London; and in the solitude and calmness of the country, had tended and comforted her. How they loved her! How they lavished daily, hourly tenderness upon her! Excellent women—twin sisters of benevolence! Creatures preserved from all the hurry, all the sordid coarseness of life, to be the simple almoners of human kindness.

It was not until after the accident that released me from the bonnet of the monkey, that I learned the good fortune of Patty. I have, however, set it down in this place, that I might as early as possible please the reader with the news of Patty's happiness.

My master, with his treasured beasts, approached the house; and in a moment were at the window the smiling, good-natured faces of the owners of the mansion. A moment afterwards appeared Patty. Bless her! how happy she seemed! What a thing of innocence and tranquil joy! Country air and a quiet spirit had imparted to Patty's looks a freshness and beauty that surprised me. Even in her worst misery, with all daily wants besetting her, there was about her an air of refinement—a quiet dignity that marked her as one of nature's gentlewomen; but now there was a simple elegance in her manner, an elevated cheerfulness of look, that showed she dwelt amid ministering comforts—that proved the love, the watchful benevolence of all about her.

With these thoughts I continued to gaze at Patty, when the monkey approached the window. For a moment I thought of the poor orphan feather-dresser, in that garret of death, with want and worst temptation around her; and I felt an inexpressible warmth and glow of heart, to behold the noble-hearted girl snatched from the weariness and violence of a rough world, and treasured as she was, a thing of purity and meekness. Such were my thoughts, as the monkey—drawing near to the window—extended his paw for a piece of cake which Patty held towards him. The next moment, and a huge dog, Dragon, the pet of the Miss Peachicks, rushed I know not whence upon the monkey, seizing the creature in his jaws. The Peachicks screamed—Patty turned pale—my master swore—the servants ran from the house, and in a trice the terrified monkey was carried into the parlour. Happily, the animal had suffered nothing but fright from the jaws of Dragon; and my master, as he allowed, more than recompensed for any anxiety he might have suffered on account of poor pug, went his way. A fortunate accident, however, allowed me to remain in the house. In the confusion I had fallen from the monkey's cap, and lay unseen on the carpet beneath the table. Indeed, I was scarcely the shred of my former self, and could be easily overlooked. Truly, there was a time when my waving whiteness caught all eyes; but now I was a poor discoloured, diminished thing—the very rag of a feather. Hence, for a whole day I remained unseen; and when I was at length discovered, I was carried into the kitchen, where I remained long enough to learn the happiness of Patty.

Immediately after the trial, Patty had been carried to Mantrap Park, the Miss Peachicks declaring that from that moment they adopted her as a younger sister—certainly, a much younger *sister*. And Patty was happy? No—not happy; she poured

forth prayers of gratitude for her deliverance; and her heart grew too big for words as the kind old gentlewomen, in the very excess of sympathy and compassion, strove to make amends for the past buffetings of fortune. Nevertheless, her heart was no longer single: it was—even ere she well knew it—wedded to Inglewood; and disease, a slow yet certain disease, was wasting him. He seemed doomed, inexorably doomed, by that subtle tyrant consumption. "His only hope," said Lintley, "is in a speedy removal to a warm climate. Then, perhaps, could he remain some two or three years, why—perhaps,"—and still the doctor hesitated; he could give no strong assurance even of the benefit of that last hope. He, however, strove to compass it. Without breathing a word to Inglewood, Lintley sought Earl Blushrose; simply told the story of his lordship's late chaplain; and the Earl, glad to remember and acknowledge the humanity of Inglewood, who—I hope the reader has not forgotten the circumstance—had at some peril saved the life of his lordship's brother, immediately promised the means required; and, briefly, Inglewood, without an unnecessary hour's delay, was to take ship for Madeira.

Solemn, yet hopeful, was the parting of Inglewood and Patty. They were already wedded in heart; and troubled, yet with sweet assurance of a future meeting, the lovers separated. Every month brought better news from the reviving man—every month saw new cheerfulness in Patty's eyes; and when I became an inmate of the Miss Peachicks' mansion, a letter was every day expected from Inglewood, announcing his arrival in England.

"It is from Inglewood," said Miss Leonora Peachick, as at length the postman knocked.

"Then he's arrived of course?" said Miss Amelia.

"No doubt of it," cried Leonora.

A few moments, and Patty, her eyes swimming with tears, placed the opened letter in the hands of the eldest lady.

"I knew it was from Inglewood," she cried, and how she trembled as she read:—

"PORTSMOUTH, ——.

"'Another day, my beloved Patty, and I shall be at your side. Travel has awarded me the wished-for blessing, health; a blessing still to be crowned by your love.

"'To the dear friends whose quick sympathies acknowledged your innocence—who have protected, sheltered ye—'"

"There, never mind all about that; read the next," said the younger Miss Peachick, and her sister obeyed.

"'To-morrow I return. The Earl has added to the obligation

which enabled me to travel, the means of competence; a small but sufficient curacy in your neighbourhood. To-morrow, and I claim a wife.

"'Thine, with deepest love,

"'ROBERT INGLEWOOD.'"

"You shall be married the day after," said the elder Miss Peachick.

"Or if not, the day after that," added the younger.

Inglewood returned, and Patty, in due season, became the curate's wife. Lintley, who had made good advances in the world, attended the solemnity, accompanied by his worthy little spouse: and happy and placid were the after-days rewarding the early trials of the gentle feather-dresser.

THE END OF THE STORY OF A FEATHER.

THE SICK GIANT

AND

THE DOCTOR DWARF.

THE

SICK GIANT AND THE DOCTOR DWARF.

CHAPTER I.

Once upon a time——

(How oft the old, old words, like silver bells, have rung us to a brief holiday—summoned the gravest of us to the hearth, to take from the lips of fable sweetest truth !)

Once upon a time, there lived a Giant and a Dwarf.

Far away, away across the sea, and glowing like a jewel in the light of heaven, there lay an island; an island heaped, like Plenty's lap, with the best bounties of the earth. Trees, fruits, and flowers, with the freshness, flavour, and scents of Paradise, adorned and enriched the spot; and there was no foul, no hurtful thing, to beset with fear and danger, valley, field, or wood.

This island was inhabited by a race of little people—so little, that the tallest of them would scarcely reach the knee of ordinary men; but their wisdom, their goodness was as the knowledge and virtue of the noblest of mortals. Indeed, it might be said of them, that, in their small anatomies there was no room for evil thoughts; that intelligence and virtue alone possessed them.

When or how these little folk became the lords of the island we know not, and seek not to know. Any way, they were blessed people. Their happy land seemed to lie nearer heaven than does the common earth. They seemed to have a more direct intelligence with nature: or, it may be, that the purity of their hearts and lives made them readier scholars; for truth and wisdom came to them as with the air they drew; and a harmony of thought and action was their daily, household music—constant in their bosoms as the rippling sea, that died in murmurs on the golden beach.

And so these little people lived without grief or envy; and died, as flowers die, without a pang. For many, many generations this felicity had blessed them; when they were doomed to feel the fulness of brotherhood with the rest of mortals, in the fulness of fear.

One morning the sun rose redly and sluggishly: the sullen ball hung heavily in the sky, that was not, as every morning, shot and interwoven with golden glories, but, without ray or fleck of fire, was dim and dead. And the hearts of the little people felt a new pain; and tears, with an unknown bitterness, broke into their eyes. The whole island seemed to grow torpid beneath a spell, of which the terrible sun appeared to the beholders the avenging cause and instrument.

Suddenly, a sunbeam—one only, red as blood—pointed, as with a finger, to a certain place upon the beach; and, without a pause, without a contrary thought, all the little people ran towards the spot, following that finger of fate.

The islanders suddenly halted in their race. Even as one man, the crowd stopped short; and even as one heart should beat, so beat the hearts of the multitude at the wonder, the wonder and terror, they looked upon!

For they beheld a rock—a huge red rock—carved in their own shape, but of so vast a size that hundreds of themselves would fail to give its bulk; a mass of rock, in the figure of a man, lying prostrate on the beach.

With what wonder—wonder deepened by a strange fear—the little islanders looked, and peeped, and pried about the monster! Its head wore a very wood of hair; and wild tangled bushes were its beard. Its eyes were shut; but then, it was a thing of rock, a senseless mass; therefore what need even of the show of eyes?

It was strange; but the mere presence of that mute, rock monster, seemed on the sudden to cloud the clear thoughts and affright the constant hearts of the little people. Many of them felt and knew their pure souls leaving them as they looked upon the wonder, and then—they could not break from the charm—they looked the more intently.

"It is plain," said one of the islanders, "plain that this thing has fallen from the sun; has been dropped upon our island, that as our god we might worship it. The sun sends it us, and the sun's finger of light shows us the divinity. Let us kneel to it and adore it."

Now, although the crowd made no signs of worship, nevertheless they uttered no word of rebuke; they heard the folly, but had no heart to gainsay the foolishness. And still they looked

upon the prostrate mass; and there seemed—so were the faces of the beholders darkened—as though a cloud of error rose from that hideous bulk, a cloud that shadowed the brows of men, and for awhile obscured the face of heaven.

"Let us worship and adore it," repeated the first speaker.

"Worship it with fire, and then adore its ashes," cried another; and his voice sang like an arrow through the crowd, so did it smite them.

"Fire and ashes!" was the cry: the better hearts of the multitude returned to them; and as the shout arose, the brightened sun leapt higher in the heavens.

Instantly the crowd sought fire. In a few minutes, flaming torches, thick as fire-flies, moved and danced about the mass of rock;—then, and for a moment only—scorched it!

With a loud, long roar, like shouts of linked thunder, that tremendous mass leapt to its feet; it clenched its fists—like the huge boles of knotted oaks they looked—and stamped the earth, that shuddered at the shock. Gnashing its teeth, while, like the vexed sea, its features worked with rage, it seemed as though some mountain-peak had, at a word, been thrown up from the bowels of the earth—a clayey mass, possessed by devils.

All the islanders, with frozen hearts, fell back—their torches flying from their hands like anvil-sparks. And still the Giant roared; and towering to its fullest height, he cast a blighting shadow on that lovely island.

How came the Giant there? What fate had flung him, like a stranded sea-monster, on the shore of that beautiful and innocent spot? Why was the happiness of a good and gentle race made the doomed sport of a mountain mass, that seemed human, but had within it no touch of human truth? Indeed, we know not; and, docile reader, seek not you to know.

After a while, the Giant still smarting from the torches, and still rubbing the burns with his hands until he roared the louder, rushed, to cool himself, into the sea.

Oh! how the hearts of the islanders rose with hope! The monster was a monster of the deep, and would return to his old abyss. No. Still the Giant tumbled and wallowed in the sea, like a rudderless hulk; and then, after a while, he stood upright, and again strode back to the island.

"Bakkuk! Bakkuk!" cried the monster; and it seemed to the islanders that the Giant called his own name. Be this as it may; as "Bakkuk" was the first articulate sound uttered by the creature, so, among the trembling islanders, Bakkuk was the known name of their terror.

How the little folk shuddered as they beheld the Giant stare

about him with a growing malice in his looks! Heavily he groaned, and with his clenched hand smote his belly, as though some pain was gnawing there. Could he be hungry? was the shuddering thought that, like a blighting gust, swept strangely through the crowd. Could the Giant be hungry? and, if so, what would be the Giant's food?

Again Bakkuk—for that shall be the Giant's name—growled and roared, and with his doubled hand struck himself. Poor, empty comfort! To unreasoning giants, knocks will not go down for flesh.

A dreadful grin pulled out the features of the Giant as he strode towards a clump of cocoa trees. In a moment he had gathered the fruit; with a thought had torn away the husk, and was grinding the kernels with his teeth.

A ray of comfort dawned upon the islanders as they lay scattered and hidden around. "The Giant eats fruit; he is not a cruel monster; he shall live upon yams, and have green sugar-cane. Bakkuk may be made serviceable and neighbourly. The Giant is, without doubt, a tender and a bloodless Giant."

These were the thoughts creeping through the hearts of the crowd. Poor souls! they lived upon fruits and pulse; they never bought a meal with a life. But Bakkuk was of very different stomach. What food supplied his baby dinners, who fed him, and how the morsels were minced and sauced to make them savoury to his infant palate, we must be content to leave in the realm of riddle. But it is plain that Bakkuk will in no way content himself with fruits or corn, whilst islanders—whom he is hereafter to discover—shall abound. There is a look of uneasy contempt from the Giant—moreover a hungry glance as of an appetite falsely provoked—as he throws away the husks and shells; the enquiring look of a man who asks of himself, "What next?" We shall see.

CHAPTER II.

Instinctively the Dwarf people, made anxious by the hungry looks of the Giant—for, in their innocence, they had the like terror of Bakkuk, that small singing-birds have of hawks—withdrew themselves among the thickets and bushes, that they might, by many opening narrow ways, reach a plain in the centre of the island. Here they would meet in general council, to consider means of defence and deliverance. And here, as the sun shone

in the midst of the heavens, that wore their wonted brightness and serenity, here all the people, their homes left empty, were gathered together.

"Zim! Zim!" cried the multitude: as from one throat, "Zim!"

Immediately, a dwarf, with some forty years, light as a crown of flowers, upon his brow, arose and prepared to address himself to the people. Ere, however, he could speak, there arose shouts of "Death to the monster!"

"Long life to the Giant!" was the only answer of Zim, the Dwarf. A low, long buzz of discontent ran through the crowd; nevertheless, no one thought to speak against the authority of that wise Dwarf; that good, benevolent little one, whose wisdom and whose virtue were the wonder and the reverence of the island. For Zim knew all things; and knowing them, was the gentler for the knowledge. When only an hour old—so ran the story—Zim had been carried from his mother's bosom by a fairy; carried to some distant place to learn all things even in his babyhood, his mother sleeping the while; years passing with her even as balmy minutes. That Zim might know the beginning of all things, he was conveyed into an egg, so said certain folks of the island; but this story was derided by others, who received it only as a fancy, or at most, the fantastic shadow of some mysterious truth.

"By the egg of Zim!" was, nevertheless, the most solemn form of speech to all the islanders. And so let it pass that the baby Zim, an hour old, was nourished in the egg of an ostrich; that, whilst so nourished, the baby learned the beginning and progress of all natural causes; that, after a time, the infant dwelt in that ostrich shell. There were those of the islanders who had pictures of the egg, with its little wicket gate, and its one long window, the sun passing through it in golden rain. But these stories are given even as parts of a Christmas feast—at the will of the guests, to be swallowed or refused.

Any way, Zim was reverenced by all the island folk; and to him, in their present peril, they looked for succour against the monster cast among them.

"Speak!" said Zim, having waited until the murmur was hushed; "speak!" and the good Dwarf smiled. "If you will the Giant's death, how shall I kill him?"

"Shiver him like wind-swept dust."—

"Strike him dead as a stone."—

"Watch him where he lies down to sleep, and then, with a flash, toss him to the clouds."—

Such were the destroying words of divers councillors; for they

knew that Zim, with even a wire's point, could work what force he would; he had so many times shown the island folks his mysterious mastery.

"Shall we not first learn," asked Zim, "whether the Giant be nothing but evil?"

"It is learnt—learnt in his looks," was the answer.

"But, granting the monster to be wicked, though not all wickedness, may we not find some good, and make it further grow in him?" inquired Zim.

"Find wild honey in the sea sand!" was the reproach.

"Well, then," answered Zim, "the Giant must die."

"Hurrah! The good Zim! the great Zim!" shouted all the island folk.

"When," continued Zim, "the Giant shall be proved all bad, all worthless. The shell shall be shivered to atoms, if it be known there is not even a seed pearl within it. For my part, I am content to run every risk."

"Ha! ha!" laughed an old dwarf; and then he frowned, and again he chuckled, sneeringly, "Yes, mighty Zim, 'tis well for you—you are safe. Not a thousand giants, and you would hinder them, could enter your house. Let them lay their little finger on your latch, and they are struck down as by a stone from heaven. With a thought, too, you can leap into your tulip-boat; and that air-bubble—hav'n't we seen it float and glitter in the sky?—lifts it to the sun. Well enough for you,"—repeated the aged scoffer; "but we have no tulip-boats, no air-bubbles to fly away with us."

At this moment the whole island echoed with the savage laughter of the Giant. The island people groaned: and then, grinding their teeth, muttered, "Death to the monster!"

And Zim, with a yet brighter smile and blither voice, cried, "Live the Giant!"

Again the horrid roar of Bakkuk seemed to rend the island; and the women screamed and trembled, and hugged their little ones closer to their breasts.

"There's hope in laughter," said Zim. "I have a mind to see what pleases the monster. Who will attend me? The sight may be worth the journey. Who?" There was a pause, and each looked in each other's face; a pause, and no answer. "It matters not," said Zim, "I'll go alone; and in good season bring you tidings of the Giant."

And as Zim turned to go on his way, all the crowd looked the lighter, and all shouted, "The good Zim! the great Zim! By the mighty Egg, the magnificent Zim!"

For two days and two nights, Zim, unseen, followed the foot-

steps of the Giant. Still did the Dwarf watch the monster Giant at his meals, as he wildly plucked the bread-fruit, and biting and then snarling at it, flung it away. Then the Giant would throw himself upon the earth and tangle his nails in the underwood, and tear it up, and drag it through his teeth, as though he had a dim sense that some strange, some wild enjoyment might be torn from it. And then the monster would stretch himself at length, and with his blood-rimmed eyes flash hatred to the sun.

On the third morning, the Giant, urged by some headlong will, strode towards that part of the island where rose the houses and temples of the dwarf-people. Still Zim followed the steps of the monster. As the Giant looked down upon the roofs, there gleamed in his eyes a strange half-witted glance. Gabbling, he passed on until he towered over the house of Zim, which, unseen by Bakkuk, the mighty little dwarf entered. Now, this house stood upon a small eminence, alone, and at some distance from all other habitations. Cunningly, curiously did Bakkuk pry down upon the abode of the wizard Dwarf; then, jabbering, the Giant dropped upon his knees, and peeped about the dwelling as a baboon would look into a twisted shell. Then Bakkuk laid his hand upon a little piece of metal, no thicker than a rush, and with the act the Giant was flung to the earth in a twisted heap, roaring like a volcano. And many of the island folk who had left the crowd upon the plain, many of them hid in trees and holes around, clapped their hands and shouted; for they acknowledged in the overthrow of the monster the wisdom dwelling in the powers of Zim.

All night the Giant lay insensible, and still Zim turned a deaf ear to the desires of the little people; he would not kill the monster. "Wait awhile, let us see; there may be good in him. Wherefore kill, when, as you see, I can, at a thought, make him powerless?"

The little folk appeared to yield to the reasons of Zim; nevertheless, one among the other, they angrily asked, "Wherefore not kill him?"

"Wait awhile," again urged the wise and placid Zim; "wait awhile; the monster's very ignorance shall help to tame him."

The next day, Bakkuk began slowly to move. With many groans he rose from the earth, and with a kind of half-brutish, half-reasoning look, stared and gazed at the house of Zim. A higher sense seemed to be awakening in him.

The monster retraced his way; and turning, passed into the gloom of a forest—a forest never entered by any of the islanders. By common consent it seemed a place to be shunned *alike by word or foot*: no man spoke of it—walked in it.

Nevertheless Zim, chartered by his cause, tracked the monster, who, like a hound following the scent, went eagerly into the darkness. There was a lurid look of appetite kindled in the Giant's face: he jabbered and gabbled, and his huge chest heaved like a mountainous wave with the storm still dying in it. Then the Giant dropped like a stone upon the rank grass and tangled underwood; and, as he tore up all that grew about him, he howled and screamed with terrible delight—howled as a wolf howls and tears at a grave, its paw close upon the dead man's cheek.

The whole frame of the Giant seemed shaken with a horrid joy. His hair was twisted and stirred like writhing snakes. Louder and louder he yelled; then broke into snaffling laughter.

Still the monster tears at grass and roots; still digs, digs into the earth, until with hungry fingers, and elbow deep he sweats in the soil. Suddenly he screams with rapture; screams like a slave of the mine that, with a diamond, finds his liberty. He snatches his hand from the earth, it grasps a root twisted like an adder; with a shout of joy he buries it in his mouth and grinds it beneath his teeth; and as he drinks the delicious poison of its juice, his eyes glow and sparkle, and his face grows purple as a grape.

CHAPTER III.

Dreadful throughout the island was the joyous howling of the monster. From that forbidden forest came cries, and shouts and horrid laughter, as though a band of fiends were keeping devilish holiday: and then the Giant would break into a sort of chant—then a minute pause, as though wondering at his own music—and then laugh the louder, and chant a wilder and a wilder strain.

Crowds of the people had gradually been drawn towards the forest. They listened with wonder as they tried to piece out of the Giant's music some rude meaning. In vain; they only heard the outbreak of a brutal nature, drunk to madness. For still the Giant clawed and dug in the earth; still did he pluck up root after root: and, still crushing the juice between his teeth, still did he feed his fury, still rising and raging with the drug.

For a day and night the Giant kept his horrid revel. For a day and night Zim refused to listen to the prayers of the multitude, who implored him, at a thought, to destroy the Giant. For they had known the mighty little Dwarf to lift a mountain

with a wire; they had seen him with his magic snap an oak like a dry reed; and they knew that in his will was the life of the monster.

"In good time," said Zim; "in good time. You shall see how this evil will become goodness. You shall learn that it is nobler to reform than to destroy. What, now, if this brute mass of power, this Bakkuk, becomes a kind and gentle creature? What if he be tamed even by his own intelligence—his own affections, when duly taught, when duly touched?"

"And what will teach him?" asked the old man, who called the loudest for the Giant's death. "What," he repeated, "will teach him?"

"Suffering," answered Zim.

"Suffering! And if he comes out of the forest, and mad as he is—ay, and madder still, for his rage seems rising like a tempest—if he ravage the whole island"——

"Peace!" said Zim.

At this moment, and as if in mockery of the word, Bakkuk shouted the louder.

"You hear," cried the old man; "and you will not end this terror?"

"But I will end it," said Zim.

"And how—by lightning?" asked another.

"By gentleness," answered the mighty Dwarf; and the people murmured, for they hoped that Zim would, with a spell drawn from heaven, wither up the Giant, as the fire from the cloud crumbles an oak.

And still the Giant roared and laughed. Hark! The earth groans and seems to shrink—the Giant has jumped to his feet; and now, like a whirlwind, he rushes from the forest, his face, as fiery as the setting sun that, with dropt jaw and foolish, heavy eyes, he stares upon. He is become drunk, insanely drunk, with the juice of the roots of the forest; and the islanders see revealed in the Giant, the truth of the legend they were born to—that whosoever lost himself in that forest would find madness.

The little people crouch and shrink away, and the Giant, stupified and half-blinded by his drink, sees them not. After a while, the islanders take courage, and with strange curiosity observe the antics of the Giant. Now he staggers and rolls—now tumbles on the earth, and roars laughter as he falls. And now, squat, he tears the grass about him, and brings it to his leaden eyes, and tries to look at blade from blade; and then hideously *simpers* at his own defeat. The stars come out, and, *as they tremble* in their light, he winks at them, and grins to see

them wink again. And now the red moon climbs the heavens; and, with a purpose in his face, the Giant turns him round, and, swaying to and fro, tries with his hands to raise himself. Gasping and groaning he at length reels upon his feet; and then, with a broken shout, throws forth his arms to tear the moon out of the sky. With a crash he tumbles again to the ground, and with stupid looks gazes in his hand; and, then beholding the moon, he, howling, knocks his head upon the earth.

"See you not," said Zim to the old man, "see you not there is hope of the monster?"

"Hope! What! to see him jump at the moon? Why, 'tis like a baby."

"Just so," answered Zim. "Didn't I say there was hope?"

Again the monster rose; again, with a shout, made towards the forest—again entered its shade—again dug and dug for roots; and then broke forth from his lair, and, shrieking and raving, rushed abroad; and none of the islanders—so were they appalled by his new fury—dared to follow him.

"Let him pass," said Zim. "This rage will spend itself. We shall hear of him."

"Hear of him!" said the old man. "Yes, we shall hear too much of him, when he has destroyed the island, destroyed all of us—no, not all; you are safe—you are a match for the monster; therefore, why need you care?"

"Peace, and patience," was the only answer of Zim.

For the whole night, and at intervals throughout the next day, the islanders who remained abroad heard the roarings of the Giant. Then came one of them with disastrous tidings: the monster had destroyed half the town, flinging aside houses with his feet as he would spurn pebbles. The multitude threatened Zim. He should instantly destroy the monster with lightning; if not ——

But Zim was calm and passionless. "Houses may be built," said the great Dwarf; "ignorance may be taught; but who can restore the Giant? Patience."

The next night came, and the voice of the Giant was heard in agony; it seemed to pierce the island; and the people who had called for the destruction of the monster, now looked upon one another with mute pity in their faces.

Oh, it was terrible to hear that voice of anguish! It seemed the suffering of a very crowd of men, so loud, so various, so searching was the torture.

"And now," said Zim, "begins the Giant's teaching. Let those who will, follow me to the monster's haunt, even to his very presence."

"What, to be torn to bits?" asked the old doubter. "No; you may go; for, as I've said, you are safe."

Zim, with a smile, prepared to depart, when numbers crowded about him, praying him not to attempt the danger; but Zim, with cheerful looks and hopeful words, smiled on their counsel, saying, "The time for the teacher is come." He then turned upon his way, and was followed by a few.

Pursuing the sound, that, with every footstep, became louder and sharper, as though torn from writhing torture, Zim and his followers reached the entrance of a cave, that now with the groans of the monster echoed with awful misery.

But yesterday there was the power of an army in that huge carcase, and now it lay helpless, almost motionless, as a stone, save that now and then the flesh wrinkled with agony. The Giant's chest roared like a roaring crater, and his teeth clashed and clanged together. That monster was bound helpless as a swathed infant in the bonds of pain.

"You see," said Zim, "his fevered body smitten with the night air and night dews."

"Plain," broke in the old doubter, who, even unwillingly, had been drawn thither by his curiosity; "plain; I see the symptoms. Even giants can't stand against rheumatism."

"Even so," replied Zim. "And now begins the Giant's schooling."

"Schooling," cried the old man; "the doctor first, I should say, before the schoolmaster."

"They shall both work together," answered Zim; and, entering the cave, he sat down at the end of the Giant's right hand. With a roar, the Giant clutched the Dwarf, and Zim's companions, screaming, fled. It was but for a moment; a spasm of agony shot through the Giant's arm, and the Doctor Dwarf stood on his feet, unbruised, unhurt.

Zim called out to his companions, who made no answer: he then went out of the cave to satisfy them, lest they should go back to the people with a false story of his death. When they saw him come from the cave, they ran to him, and besought him not to persevere in his mad intent: his life would be cast away upon the Giant.

"Kill the monster! kill him!" cried all the people.

"Teach him! teach him!" answered Zim, with a smile, and again he turned to re-enter the cave, and again the people crowded about him, beseeching him.

"The lightning! the lightning!" they said. "No teacher like the lightning. That is the readiest means. Kill the monster where he lies, and let the cave be his burying-place."

"Why that would be the easiest way," said Zim.

"The easiest, and the best," answered the people. "Hurrah, Zim! you'll kill him?"

"I think not," answered the Doctor, with a humorous look. "No, I think I'll teach him."

"Teach him! And with what?" asked the old doubter, with a sneer.

"With this, for one thing," said the Doctor Dwarf; and, at the word he plucked a wild flower growing at the mouth of the cave, and then motioning farewell to the people, passed in to his Giant patient.

CHAPTER IV.

CAUTIOUSLY and tenderly did Zim approach the sufferer, whose every nerve in its agony was as a burning chain upon him. The Giant could not move a finger, that the motion was not punished by a torment; and so he lay motionless; now piteously groaning, and now with flashing and malignant eyes mowing and jabbering at the Dwarf Doctor, who, with a benignant smile, began to move more confidently around the monstrous bulk of flesh, Bakkuk still following the motions of Zim with hateful glances. Twice or thrice Bakkuk strove to snatch at his benefactor, and every time yelled with pain, and every time yielded to the chastising master. And so the Giant became worn down and passive; and, by degrees, the cannibal fierceness that fired his eye-balls grew dim and was quenched; and, at length, with a dull, filmy glaze, the monster scarcely seemed to note the motions of his benefactor.

Zim's small fingers lay upon the Giant's pulse, that knocked hard and fiery. There lay the huge, pain-stricken heap of flesh, with no more reason to comprehend the agony that tore it than has Etna of the fire within its entrails. There it lay; and there, in the face of that little speck, the Doctor Dwarf, shone the serene might of intelligence—the soft and steady ray of knowledge.

Zim quitted the cave, and taking with him certain of the islanders who still lingered at a distance without, to assist him in the search, journeyed a short distance to gather herbs. These were plucked and brought in vast heaps to the mouth of the cave; and some were bruised, and the juices strained, and some Zim brought whole to the Giant. With these plants the Doctor *covered* the burning body of his patient; and, in sooth, it was

no light work for one small pair of hands; for, although Zim entreated partnership of aid from his fellows, they all, through fear, refused it—it was, we say, no holiday task for one such dwarf as Zim to cover so huge a frame as the Giant's, from his breast to the soles of his feet. Nevertheless, this Zim after some hours accomplished: and there lay Bakkuk, the Giant, all save his face and head, green as a grassy hill in June, covered, clothed with the medicinal herbs prescribed and administered by the Dwarf Doctor.

And it was beautiful to see—and Zim's heart opened and melted at the sight—the eyes of the Giant. For as the delicious coolness of the herbs allayed the malice of the fever, as their healing beneficence carried health into every pore, quenching the fire of the disease, it was beautiful to see the looks of the Giant; looks that erewhile were lurid and savage as the sun that sets with threat of tempest—looks that now were filled with the soft, mild gladness of a dawning May. Fuller and fuller the light shone in them—shone with new consciousness, with deeper and deeper intelligence. The heart of the Doctor Dwarf leapt within him; and having filled a large gourd, thrice the size of his own head—so big, so heavy, he staggered with it—filled it to the brim with the juice of herbs, he clambered up the Giant, toiling his weary way until he reached his chest; and there, panting from his labour, there stood the little Doctor, with his medicine under the brow of the Giant's chin. How the islanders—for a few of the boldest had, one by one, edged into the cave—how they marvelled at the bold perseverance of Zim; and how, with a scream, they rushed back from the cave, when they beheld the Giant drop his jaw, and show his terrible teeth! But Zim was stout of heart, and saw in the Giant's eyes that the Giant had a dawning sense of the further good prepared for him; and, so believing, accommodated his vast mouth to the puny endeavours of the Doctor. With much trouble, Zim emptied the gourd into the mouth of the Giant, who with milder looks and with his only manner, grunted thanks. Again and again did Zim perform his journey up the Giant's frame; again and again drenched his monster patient.

And for three days and nights Zim tended and watched the sick Giant; and for three days and nights beheld the countenance of the monster change from brute ferocity to passive gentleness. On the morning of the fourth day the fever was wholly subdued; and, as the early breeze from the sea blew into the cave, the breast of the Giant seemed labouring with a new emotion; his bosom gently heaved and heaved, as broad and gentle as the distant wave. And then his eyes grew softer

and softer, and at length melted into floods of thanksgiving tears.

And Zim knelt beside the Giant—knelt, and himself gave thanks for the precious bounty, the teaching beneficence, of such tears; for he knew that they came from the Giant's heart. Grateful nature had smitten the stone, and it gushed forth healing water.

And then the little island folk began to crowd into the den, the news of the change in the Giant having passed from mouth to mouth. And the Giant turned his looks upon them; and his former sullen, rugged face was softened and refined by smiles. And the islanders, wondering at the marvel, uttered prayers and gave praises to Zim. Now, who so great as Zim—the good Zim —the mighty Zim!

And days pass by, and every day brings strength and gentleness to the Giant; and every day takes with it some savage trace, some harsh and angry line. The storm of brutal passions that had darkened the features of Bakkuk was gradually dispelled, and simple goodness dawned throughout. Long and painful was the labour of the Doctor Dwarf, resolved to teach the Giant; who, from signs, grew into the use and knowledge of articulate sounds; and still his outward aspect became softer, gentler, with every acquitted task.

When Bakkuk had sufficiently mastered words whereby to attempt a revelation of his thoughts, Zim sought to know the Giant's history. How came he on the island? Where had he dwelt before? What his condition? And then Bakkuk would press his head with his hands; and, for a while pore dreamily upon the ground; then cast disordered looks into the heavens; then throw apart his arms, as though despairingly he would scatter the clouds that darkened him. No; he remembered nothing—nothing distinct. He would smile and clap his hands at the murmur of the sea. And when Zim made the Giant place a shell to his ear, he listened and listened, and smiles crept over his face; and his eyes softened at the sound; and then he placed the shell at his heart, as though it spoke to that.

But the wonder of Bakkuk—his marvel of marvels—was a little child. He would hold his breath with awe, when Zim brought him his little son, that would stand in the Giant's palm, and laugh up in his huge face, softened into reverence and love. And Bakkuk would compare the child's arm with his own; compare finger with finger; and then laugh, and then look sad; and then new affection for the little one would gleam in the Giant's eyes. Then again and again he would wish to throw himself upon the earth, that he might worship Zim; who ever

reproved the Giant, teaching him by his own motion to look into the heavens and pray.

For many months Bakkuk remained in the cave, and was fed by the labour of the islanders, who—so willingly were they guided by the counsels of Zim—cheerfully worked for the savage; nay, sometimes stinted themselves, that Bakkuk might have his mighty fill. And still Zim taught his pupil, every week advancing: taught him the frame of the globe; its bones of rock and stone—its flesh of earth—its outward verdure. So taught him the beautiful mystery of a flower, that the Giant would look upon the simplest bud with all the awe and reverence that the savage brings to the foulest idol: taught him the fabric of the heavens, with the rising and the setting of the sun; taught him to know the stars as they came glittering forth; taught him to know the motion of the moon as she swam into the firmament.

And every lesson, we say, brought its added light, that, from the mind of the Giant, shone in his face, and gave to him the beauty of love and gentleness. And Bakkuk learned to know the wonders about him as only the shadows of a greater wonder—learned to listen to the beating of his heart only as an instrument whose every throb told of a nearer and a nearer world.

CHAPTER V.

Love—love for his teacher was of daily growth in the heart of the Giant. And great was the joy of Zim when he beheld his patient, controlled by the grateful impulse, cast himself upon his knees, and heard him utter prayers for his preserver; heard the poor, enfranchised monster pour forth thanksgiving for the blessings of his redemption. With every touch of truth, of knowledge, Bakkuk had received a ray of light, a look of gentleness; and when, at length he stood before the assembled people—what a holiday was that time of triumph!—his face was beautiful in its mingled look of power and peace; and his every word, a word of gratitude—of love. He, who, with brute license, had raged throughout the island, now moved in it as in a temple; his wonder, his affection raised and wrought upon by every sight and every sound. To him the smallest flower was a precious thing; for he had been taught to see in it a part of the great mystery that shines in the stars: to him the sea-shell gave

the self-same music as the unfathomable deep; sweeter, softer, but the same. And with his mind thus taught and dignified, it was beautiful to mark the gentleness with which the Giant bore himself towards the little people of the island. It seemed that he lost all sense of his surpassing bulk and strength, in humility and thankfulness towards his benefactors.

After a time, Zim led the Giant to the spot where, in his ignorance, he had thrown down houses and temples. When Bakkuk saw the ruins he blushed; and then begged to be taught that night and day he might labour to restore them.

"In good time," said Zim, and then led him to the forest.

"It was here," said the Dwarf, "here that you sought the means of madness." And then, to the questions of the Giant, Zim recounted the story of Bakkuk's frenzy.

"Now, then," said the Giant, "let me pay recompense. Give me this place: let me labour here."

"It is an evil place," said Zim; "all men shun it: a place whose shadows are as griefs—whose dews are as misery."

"Give it me," cried the Giant. "You shall teach, and I will work."

"Be it so," said Zim. "I can answer for the people; do what you will."

Next morning, at sunrise, the Giant went forth to work in the forest. Before the sun had set, he had plucked up every tree, piling them in many a heap. Then he set fire to the piles; and for days and days tended the flames, fanning them as they failed, and feeding them with new offerings. At length, that ill-boding forest lay in so much dust upon the earth—the ground scathed and mortified by fire. Great was the rejoicing of the islanders, when they beheld the sun fall upon the earth so lately deformed and blotted by that fatal wood.

The Giant's next task was to till the land. That land, redeemed from evil, should be his first offering to his benefactors. Corn should grow there, and his heart would rejoice and melt at the harvest. And so, indeed, it happened. Bakkuk, instructed by Zim, laboured early and late; and — how quick the seasons passed!—many a broad acre was covered with golden corn; corn of larger, fuller growth, than heretofore had flourished in the island. The Giant's harvest-home was, indeed, a holiday, and its memory held in celebration for many an age.

"Better to teach than to kill," said Zim, quietly, to the ancient doubter; as the Dwarf pointed to the large shocks of wheat sown, reaped and piled by Bakkuk.

But there was no part of the island that did not bear some mark of the Giant's zeal and gratitude.

"We must have a star-tower," said Zim; "a mighty pile, from whose top we may the better look upon the heavens."

And Bakkuk quarried the marble, and carried the blocks; and, with his mighty force, laid stone upon stone, the brain of little Zim teaching and directing him. And when the tower was completed, Zim ascended to the top, taking with him the old sceptic. And as the stars trembled close above their heads, raining down looks of peace and love, the doubter said—"Beautiful, beautiful stars! I could not have thought ye so glorious and so lovely."

And Zim replied, "You owe the knowledge to Bakkuk: without his help, this sight, in the fulness of its magnificence, had been denied you. Brother, I ask again, is it not better to teach than to kill?"

And thus the labours of the Giant filled the island with blessings; and the Giant was blessed in the reward of his labours—in the wages of respect and love he enjoyed of his masters. They had taught him the true dignity of life; and whilst he ministered to their higher delights, they repaid him with gentleness and affection.

And at length, old, and very old, the Giant could no longer labour. His hair became as snow, and the light died in his eyes; and the old blind Giant was loved and cherished for the bygone days of his strength. He was, in his very helplessness, reverenced as the monument of departed vigour.

At length Bakkuk, the Giant, died. He died upon a hill, beneath the open sky, feeling, he said, though he saw them not, the stars upon his face.

And where Bakkuk was buried there grew a mighty banyan-tree—a tree in which the fancies of after-generations would see and trace the bones and sinews of the Giant; a tree that gave shelter and food to thousands. And, it is said, never did man seek the hospitality of its shade, or the nourishment of its fruit, that he did not bless the memory of the good Giant, that he did not think with love and tenderness upon the Doctor Dwarf.

THE END.

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